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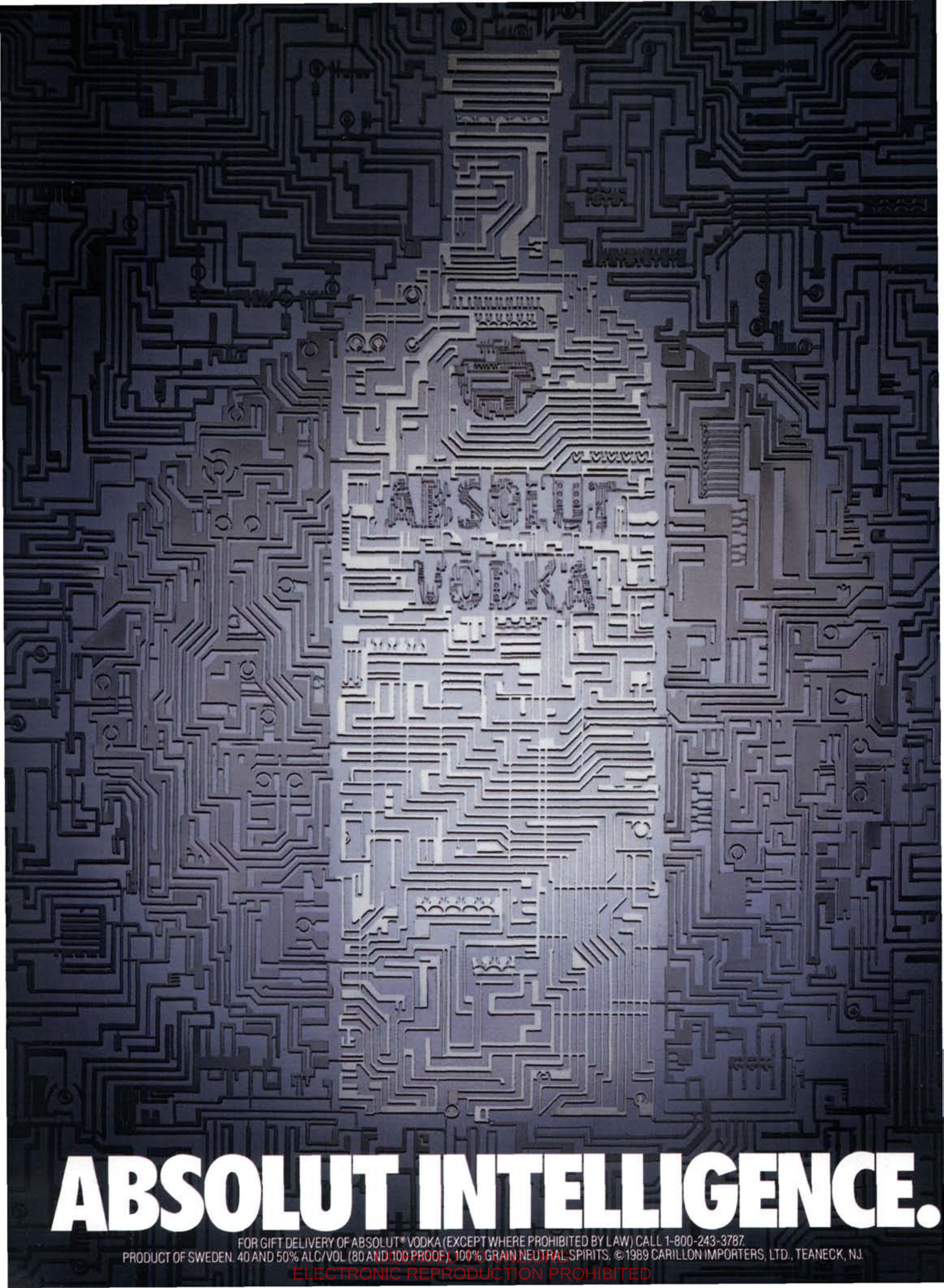

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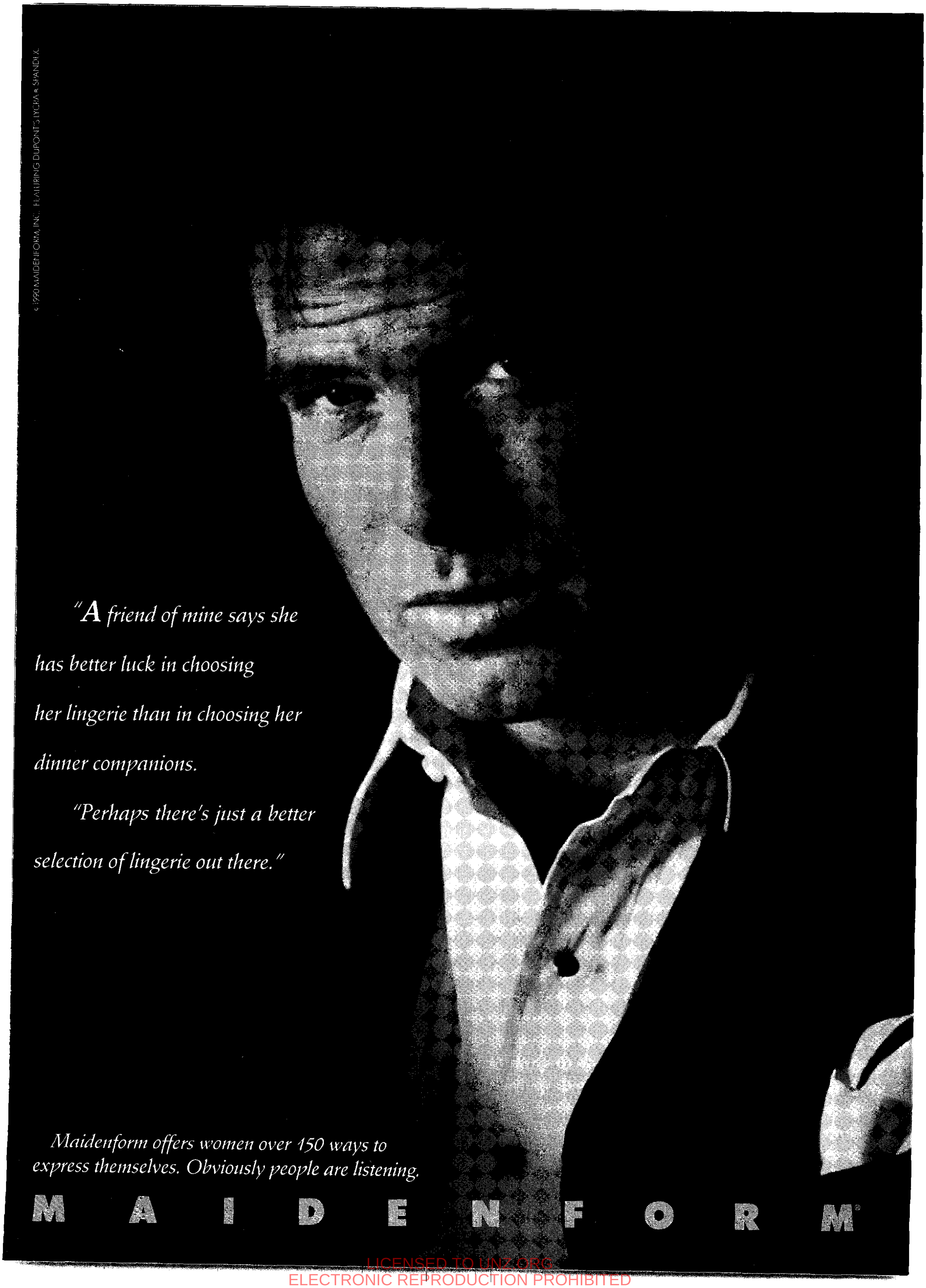

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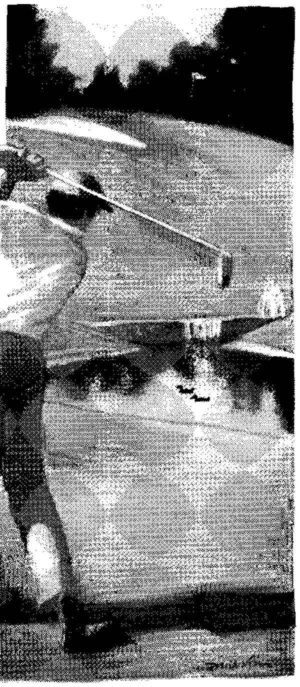

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

HENRY JAMES, observing a not very good marionette show at a New Year's Eve party chez Edmund Gosse, is said to have pointed it out as an interesting example of economy: "economy of means" as well as "economy of effect." That was pretty much how we felt about the art of puppetry in general up until a few weeks ago, when we saw Julie Taymor's "Juan Darién," at St. Clement's Church.

First performed by the Music-Theatre Group in 1988, "Juan Darién" presents itself as a Carnival Mass based on a story by the Uruguayan writer Horacio Quiroga. In a South American jungle, a tiger cub whose mother has been killed by a hunter finds its way to the house of a woman mourning the death of her own baby. The woman takes the cub in and attempts to hide it from the hunter, who has come looking for it. When the hunter uncovers what the woman is hiding, we find that the cub has been miraculously transformed into a human child. Throughout the work—which goes on to recount the boy's fate at the hands of the human world—Taymor weaves excerpts from the Latin Mass (set to music by Elliot Goldenthal) into the story of Juan Darién, using the visual imagery of the culture of Catholicism to suggest analogies with the Christ story.

What's eloquent in Taymor's version of the story—apart from the beauty of her imagery in conception and execution—is the way in which she uses her form to comment on the text. Her production uses human actor-singers as well as every known variety of mask work and puppetry; everything that isn't human is a kind of puppet. There are puppets who become human (in more than one sense) and humans who turn out to be a puppet of some sort. Taymor's art resides chiefly in questions of what we're made to understand and what we're allowed to see: because everything either is or isn't a puppet for a specific reason, and because we can usually see the people manipulating the puppets, we find ourselves thinking about all the things that Taymor is trying to say with this story—about man in his relationship to animals, to art, to nature, to fate, to the idea of a God. Even the musicians, positioned above the stage, are only partly visible to us, as if to suggest that someone might be manipulating the orchestra from below.

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OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Circle Repertory Company—A new comedy by Craig Lucas, PRELUDE TO A KISS, is the fourth in this season's series of five productions. Alec Baldwin, Barnard Hughes, and Mary-Louise Parker are in the cast, which was directed by Norman René. In previews. (Circle Repertory Company Theatre, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

Dylan Thomas: Return Journey—Bob Kingdom in a one-man show adapted from Thomas's writings. Directed by Anthony Hopkins. Preview Feb. 20. Opens Feb. 21 at 8. (Hudson Guild Theatre, 441 W. 26th St. 760-9810.)

Jonah—A new musical by Elizabeth Swados, based on Robert Nathan's novel "Jonah and the Whale." In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Negro Ensemble Company—Presenting BURNER'S FROLIC, by Charles Fuller. With Adam Wade, Iris Little, Cynthia Bond, and Charles Weldon. Previews through Feb. 24. Opens Feb. 25 at 3. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545.)

Square One—Richard Thomas and Dianne Wiest have the leads in a new play by Steve Tesich, which Jerry Zaks directed. Previews through Feb. 21. Opens Feb. 22 at 8. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

NEW THIS SEASON

Ariano—A play by Richard Irizarry, presented by the Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre. Four performances a week are in Spanish; three are in English. (304 W. 47th St. 354-1293. Closes Feb. 25.)

Away Alone—No one could accuse Janet Noble's sweet, feckless comedy about young Irish immigrants in the Bronx of being overly sophisticated. The play is innocent, sentimental, and old-fashioned—a little like the characters it portrays—but the feeling it creates in the audience becomes infectious, a little like the laughter it inspires. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

Carbondale Dreams—Steven Sater's trilogy about a family of Ugly-American Jews in the Midwest began life as a pair of one-acts entitled "Beth" and "Bradley." (A third, "Arnold," has since been added.) We sat through "Beth" and found it so full of Jewish self-hate and hostility toward one's parents (the work reeks of autobiography) as to be unendurable. Perhaps Sater needs to be reminded that the best revenge is living well, not writing poorly. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

The Circle—Rex Harrison, Glynis Johns, Stewart Granger, and an able supporting company have raised Somerset Maugham to the heights of Sheridan and Congreve. The play is about an elderly couple who pay a visit to the wife's middle-aged son, whom she deserted thirty years before. Brian Murray directed the fine production. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/4/89.) (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Circle Repertory Company—Presenting final performances of IMAGINING BRAD, a comedy by Peter Hedges. With Sharon Ernster, Melissa Joan Hart, and Erin Cressida Wilson. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076. Closes Feb. 25.)

City of Angels—Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; James Naughton and Gregg Edelman, leading men; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in absolutely top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular settings and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (12/25/89) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Closer than Ever—This charmer amounts to an anthology of songs and sketches by Richard Maltby, Jr. (words), and David Shire (music), as sung and performed by Brent Barrett, Sally Mayers, Richard Muenz, and Lynne Wintersteller. They are a gifted quartet, and lucky to have such attractive, humorous, and tender songs to sing and words to speak. The fact that there is no amplification is an extra boon. (11/13/89) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde—Another example of the current literary and dramatic vogue for recasting the strange case, this time by Georg Osterman. The production has the Ridiculous Theatrical Company's usual vices (excessive length, scattershot antics) and virtues (clever sets, animated performances by, among others, Everett Quinton and Eureka). (Charles Ludlam Theatre, One Sheridan Square. 691-2271. Closes March 11.)

A Few Good Men—"Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military-courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series, but the performances, by an ace cast under Don Scardino's direction, are wonderful. (11/27/89) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

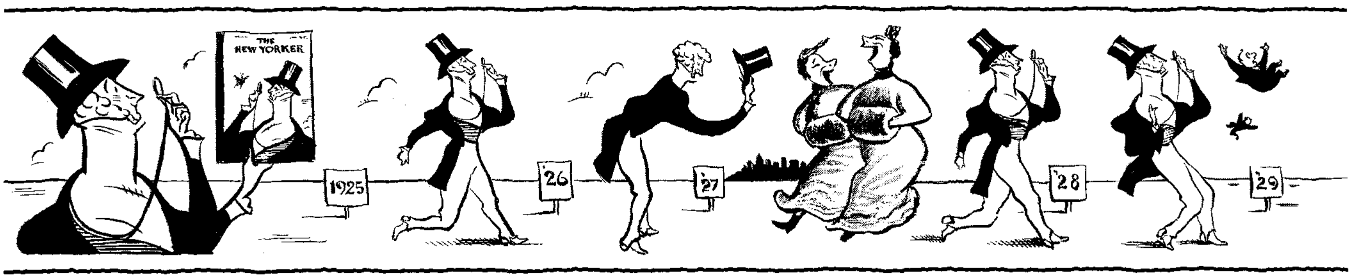
Grand Hotel—The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (11/27/89) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.)

Gypsy—This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful—and the cast (led by Tyne Daly, Crista Moore, and Jonathan Hadary) so engaging—that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). Trust Broadway; you'll have ample time to welcome Miss Daly when she mounts the steps and delivers her first onstage line. (12/4/89) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

Juan Darién—A revival of a 1988 Music-Theatre Group production. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Closes March 3.)

Manhattan Punch Line—Presenting the annual festival of new one-act comedies. Evening A: "Philip Glass Buys a Loaf of Bread," by David Ives; "Portfolio," by Tom Donaghy; "The Show Must Go On," by Laurence Klavan; and "How Are Things in Costa del Fuego?," by Rick Louis. . . . ¶ Evening B: "The Fertilization Opera," by Peter Tolan; "Grunions," by Barbara Lindsay; "Brunch at Trudy and Paul's," by Michael Aschner; "Fellow Travellers," by Jeffrey Hatcher; and "The Artistic Direction," by Roger Hedden. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes March 4.)

Meet Me in St. Louis—If you like the old M-G-M musical, you probably won't like this stage



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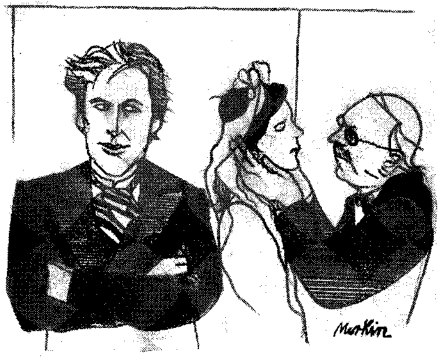


Alec Baldwin, Mary-Louise Parker, and Barnard Hughes in Circle Rep's "Prelude to a Kiss"

version, which combines the earnest, wholesome values of the movie with an aesthetic of surpassing vulgarity. In any case, why see the show when you can rent the movie? (11/20/89) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.)

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE—This production, directed by Peter Hall, tries a little too hard to avoid anti-Semitism (by making Christians look awful) and seems more interested in the quality of male bonding than that of mercy. As Shylock, Dustin Hoffman is dignified but ultimately ineffective. Fortunately, the production is about great ensemble Shakespeare rather than about Hoffman's Shylock, and it would be worth seeing if only for Michael Siberry (Gratiano) and Geraldine James (Portia). (1/1/90) (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-0102. Closes March 10.)

MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY—Estelle Parsons reprises her original role in this production of Roberto Athayde's 1977 play. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

SEX, DRUGS, ROCK & ROLL—Eric Bogosian's new one-man show. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

SOME AMERICANS ABROAD—A comedy by Richard Nelson, imported from London. The cast includes Bob Balaban, Kate Burton, and Henderson Forsythe. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

SWEENEY TODD—Bob Gunton and Beth Fowler have the leads in the York Theatre Company's production of the Sondheim musical. Susan H. Schulman was the director. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Closes Feb. 25.)

TRU—Robert Morse gives a deeply thought-out, accomplished performance as Truman Capote—by turns funny, bitchy, ironic, and rueful—at the end of his life and his tether. The play was written by Jay Presson Allen. (1/1/90) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

WHEN SHE DANCED—A play about Isadora Duncan by Martin Sherman. With Elizabeth Ashley. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

ZORA NEALE HURSTON—A play by Laurence Holder, with Elizabeth Van Dyke as the author of the novel "Their Eyes Were Watching God." Directed by Wynn Handman. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074. Closes March 4.)

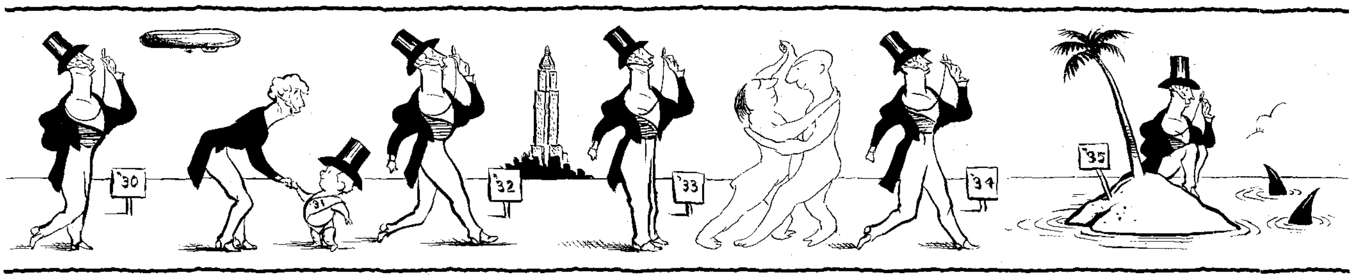
LONG RUNS

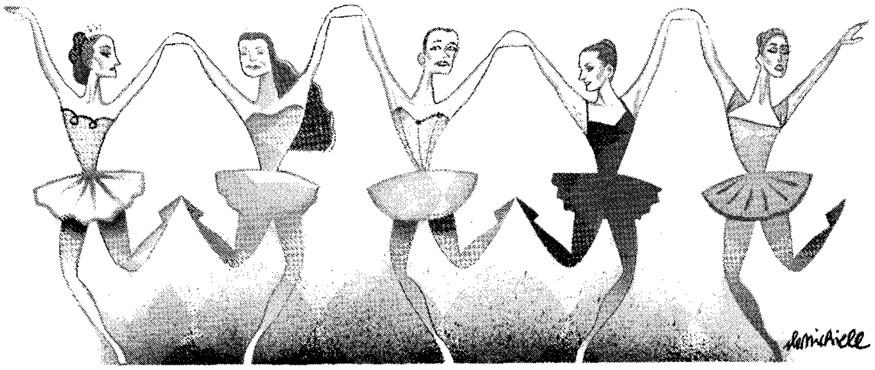
BLACK AND BLUE: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, Bunny Briggs, Jimmy Slyde, and a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **DRIVING MISS DAISY:** Frances Sternhagen and Arthur French star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run turns thirty this year. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1990:** A source of continual merriment, this recently updated revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **THE HEIDI CHRONICLES:** Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With Brooke Adams. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **JEROME ROBBINS' BROADWAY:** A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **LEND ME A TENOR:** The setting of this farce by Ken Ludwig is a hotel suite in Cleveland in 1934, where a famous tenor who is booked to sing "Otello" takes an overdose of barbiturates. A substitute must be found. Under Jerry Zaks' direction, all the surprises up the dramatist's sleeve are brought to comic life. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **LES MISERABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **RUMORS:** This farce about a party to celebrate a couple's tenth anniversary (the host and hostess are mysteriously absent) may well be the funniest play that Neil Simon has written. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Closes Feb. 24.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling takes place in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 246-0102. Closes Feb. 25.)

DANCE

ISADORA DUNCAN has always enjoyed a legend as a great presence, but only intermittently has the case been made for her as a powerful, serious, and professional dancer. In our own time, the most persuasive evidence for her theatrical imagination has been put forward by a New Yorker, Annabelle Gamson. As a child, Miss Gamson learned Duncan's dances from Julia Levien, who had learned them from a couple of Isadora's adopted daughters, but she didn't come to present Duncan's work to the public until after a dance career that had spanned several decades and included styles ranging from Anna Sokolow modern to Broadway. In the mid-nineteen-seventies, Miss Gamson began to attract attention with her Duncan solos. They were thoughtful, dramatic, and intensely musical; and, if they left an impression of less spontaneity than one might have expected from Duncan herself, they permitted all sorts of dynamic nuances and structural niceties to emerge from the choreography. These days, she coaches other soloists to perform the Duncan pieces in the context of her small company, Dance Solos.

Miss Gamson is also at work on a film called "On Dancing Isadora's Dances," a version of which will be shown on March 4, at the Museum of Natural History. Recently, after seeing the twenty-four radiant minutes of it that are now complete (she wants to add three minutes, so it can be televised), we asked her to tell us more about the project. Miss Gamson's authoritative performances here were recorded in one exhausting day, shortly after her last Carnegie Hall concert, in 1984, with the pianist Garrick Ohlsson, who performs in the film with her. Rehearsal and coaching sessions were shot later. Miss Gamson worked out her voice-over comments as the filming went along; she also had a strong say in the cinematography and the editing. By involving herself deeply in all aspects of the process, she seems to have brought us close to Duncan herself, of whom no film footage exists. "I have not a clue as to what she did or didn't do in performance, except through the way she affected artists who drew her and through what she wrote," Miss Gamson said of her inspiration. "And a lot of her own writing is not realistic. The only things I'm doing that she did are the steps. But when you experience a dance physically you start to know something about it spiritually."





Maria Calegari, Darci Kistler, Merrill Ashley, Heather Watts, and Kyra Nichols of the New York City Ballet

New York City Ballet—Final performances of the season. Feb. 20 at 8: "Swan Lake," "Black & White," and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 8: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 8: "Swan Lake," "Black & White," and "In G Major." . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 8: "Ballo della Regina," "Other Dances," "Moves," and "In G Major." . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 2: "Ballo della Regina," "Other Dances," "Black & White," and "In G Major." . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 8 and Feb. 25 at 1: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 7: Excerpts from twelve works. (A benefit for the Dancers' Emergency Fund.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Feld Ballets/NY—Opening performances of a six-week engagement that will run through April 1. Feb. 20-21 at 8 and Feb. 25 at 2: "A Footstep of Air," "Circa," and "Skara Brae." . . . ¶ Feb. 22-23 and Feb. 27 at 8: "Theatre," "The Gods Amused," "Danzon Cubano," and "Ah Scarlatti" (New York première). . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 8 and Feb. 25 at 7:30: "Contra Pose" (New York première), "At Midnight," and "The Jig Is Up." . . . ¶ Feb. 28 at 7: "Contra Pose," "Mother Nature" (New York première), and "Ah Scarlatti." (A benefit.) (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company—Presenting a revival of "A Brahms Symphony" and the premières of "Fandango" and "From Paris to Jupiter." With the Solisti New York Chamber Orchestra, directed by Ransom Wilson. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Feb. 27 at 7:30 and Feb. 28 at 8. Through March 4.)

Jennifer Monson—With a company of dancers in the première of "Ursa's Door." (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8112. Feb. 22 at 7:30 and Feb. 23-25 at 8:30.)

"Sina—From Sharpeville to Soweto"—An evening of South African music and dance, with the IZulu Dance Theatre, vocalist Thuli Dumakude, and two musical groups—Bayeza and Thokoza. (Triplex, 199 Chambers St. 618-1980. Feb. 24 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

Mel Lewis was not a fussy drummer. He was a vigilant timekeeper who drew attention to others rather than to himself, and he played with such a spare and genial touch that a reviewer, temporarily put out by Lewis's homespun effects, once wrote that the drummer seemed to be "hooking rugs back there." Lewis died of cancer early this month. He was sixty years old and had spent more than a third of his life at the Village Vanguard, where, over the course of roughly twelve hundred Monday nights, he led his big band in the often ecstatic rendering of what he called "classy tunes with good changes." Simply put, those Monday nights were among the best times anyone ever had below street level.

Lewis's death came only days before his band's twenty-fourth anniversary. Following its yearly tradition, the group—which, with Dennis Mackrel behind the drums, continues to swing in Lewis's honor—will play a six-night gig at the Vanguard this week. Lewis used to look forward to these extended engagements. They were a chance for the band to coalesce, to eliminate the sound of creaking bones one sometimes heard on Monday when everybody was still limbering up. Lewis, who was fiercely proud of his Jazz Orchestra and not unaware that he and co-founder Thad Jones had helped inspire a big-band revival, once said of the week-long stands, "By Wednesday, it gets so good it's ridiculous."

The last time we saw Lewis perform was about six months ago, when he was playing with a quintet on a night off from the Vanguard. What we remember most about the evening is the two young off-duty drummers sitting next to us. After having a reverential conversation about the Master's work—much of which we couldn't follow, because it was in coded musician-speak—they put their heads down on the table and, peering beneath menus and between beer bottles, stared in disbelief at Mel Lewis's hands. Lewis himself had lost his hair to chemotherapy, and his head looked as smooth and perfect as an eggshell. Needless to say, he remained quite high-spirited, and after a few numbers he officially opened the show by joking, "Mel Lewis couldn't be here tonight, but I've spent all afternoon listening to his records." So have we.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

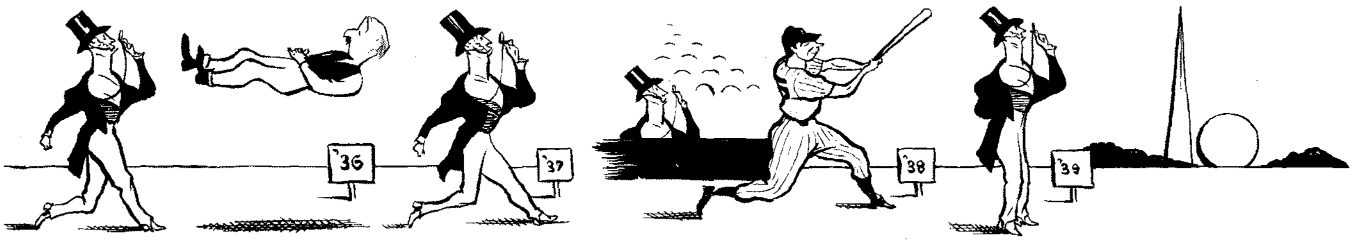
Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—The newly refurbished Oak Room is currently home to **ANN HAMPTON CALLAWAY,** a fine singer-pianist who can imitate Billie Holliday and Marlene Dietrich, sing an E-flat above high C, and say, without sounding immodest, "People often come up to me and ask why I'm not famous." Apart from a few requisite supper-club numbers—when she played here a few years back, the audience requested "Memory" three times a night—Ms. Callaway's catalogue includes her own songs, songs by lesser-known New York composers, and songs improvised around suggestions made by musically inclined patrons. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen. Singer **JULIE KURNITZ** follows Ms. Callaway with a show at eleven-fifteen. Dining.

Astro's Turf, Second Ave. at 94th St. (289-0415—A goofy, futuristic theme bar apparently designed by George Jetson. On the ceiling and floor one finds astronaut dolls playing golf on amoeba-shaped greens; over the bar, a giant green octopus (a sextopus, actually, but who's counting?); and, on Thursday night's menu, a drink called the Woo Woo Wedge. On a recent night, while a Blues Brother-ish band held sway onstage, patrons were trying to figure out what the hell NASA had to do with golf, when someone informed them that the longest golf drive ever made was on the distant, grassless country club known as the moon. The informant didn't know if the astronaut in question went on to play every hole. D.j.s are usually on the premises, but there is live music Mondays after ten.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, near the flower and fur districts. **ANGELINA RÉAUX**—who has a rich, theatrical soprano and who, after breaking both legs during a "Sweeney Todd" performance a while back, told her doctors, "Don't cut this Tony-award-winning costume!"—*is currently in residence here.* A few years back, Ms. Réaux performed at the Public Theatre, where she dedicated a one-woman show to the music of Kurt Weill. The fine notices she received—she was even written up in a Kurt Weill newsletter—no doubt had Teresa Stratas looking over her shoulder. Ms. Réaux is once again singing Weill, along with Stephen Sondheim and Ricky Gordon. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A jazz club that would be a perfect stop on a bus tour (there's even a souvenir shop that sells Kodak). It's a good idea to make a reservation and show up well in advance. Feb. 20-25 belongs to a group led by **MONTE ALEXANDER.** A Jamaican-born pianist and occasional singer, Mr. Alexander has roamed from swing to calypso to Nat (King) Cole; for this engagement, expect him to favor his Caribbean roots. Jon Lucien is also on the bill. A Brazilian entry begins on Feb. 27 with **AIRTO & FLORA PURIM,** plus **HERBIE MANN & JASIL BRAZZ.** First set at nine. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if the crowd coöperates, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. A trio led by **CHICO FREEMAN** (with bassist **CECIL MC BEE** and pianist **GEORGE CABLES**) is in charge through Feb. 24. Mr. Freeman, a tenor saxophonist from Chicago (his father, Von, was also a formidable sax man), can move from a smooth, wistful tone to barnyard squawking, but even at his thorniest he's never abrasive. A while back, Mr. Freeman told a reporter, "Until I came to New York, I thought free



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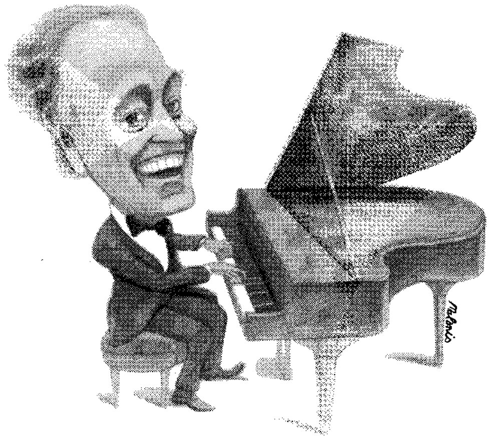

John Bunch at the Knickerbocker

jazz was playing without getting paid." The pianist **JOANNE BRACKEEN** and Mr. McBee begin a run on Feb. 26. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to the gravelly contralto **JULIE WILSON.** Ms. Wilson's new offering—in the past half-dozen years she has dedicated revues to famous and obscure chatter by Cole Porter, Stephen Sondheim, the Gershwins, and others—takes on the music of Cy Coleman, whose work can also be heard in "City of Angels," currently on Broadway. Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Bemelmans Bar, **RONNY WHYTE** sings from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CAT CLUB, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, this club, usually dominated by such acts as Exiter and Sweet Cheetah, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. An older couple glide across the floor at a comfortable pace, lost in a nostalgic reverie; an eager young man, his tie loosened, throws his date around like a crazed cossack. On Feb. 25, the veteran tenor saxophonist, arranger, and bandleader **GEORGE KELLY** directs his Jazz Sultans. Music from eight to midnight.

CONDON'S, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—A new, candlelit catacomb just east of Union Square. In an effort to get patrons close to the action, the owners—one of whom previously owned Sweet Basil and managed Indigo Blues—have crowded Condon's stage with tables. The result is that diners here will either find the atmosphere snug and intimate or spend a good deal of time looking for fire exits. **AHMAD JAMAL** is at the bench through Feb. 25. The sparkling bebop pianist **TOMMY FLANAGAN,** of whom the late Bradley Cunningham once said, "Piano players are supposed to make you laugh, then break your heart, and that's what Tommy does," will be in residence with a trio as of Feb. 27. Music after ten.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—If submarines had jazz clubs, they might look like this basement haunt, which is reached by passing through a tight corridor where you half expect to bump into Admiral Nimitz. This is not the place for those with a fear of intimacy: at the front tables you can go eye to eye with your favorite performers, and no matter where you're seated there's not much room to practice your T'ai Chi. **GEORGE COLEMAN,** the fiery tenor-sax man who came up in the Memphis of B. B. King et al., guides a quartet through Feb. 25. The saxophonist **JOE HENDERSON** and his quartet get started on Feb. 27. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—Through the glass roof, which supports a jungle of potted greenery, you can admire the fruits of the midtown real-estate boom and, when available, the moon. A Steinway grand sits in the middle of the room, making things tricky for the waiters but improving the over-all quality of life. **DICK SUDHALTER**—who plays cornet and flugelhorn, and whose rather involved résumé includes serving as a U.P.I. correspondent, writing a biography of Bix Beiderbecke, and reviewing books for the British magazine *Punch*—leads a trio here through Feb. 25. Pianist **JUNIOR MANCE** and bassist **MARTY RIVERA** start Feb. 27. Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

GONZALEZ Y GONZALEZ, 625 Broadway, at Houston St. (473-8787)—Loud, brash, and big—de rigueur for the lower-Broadway dining scene. The theme is, of course, Mexican, and you get the whole enchilada: a giant cactus here, a parade-float sombrero there, animal skulls, religious artifacts, and jalapeño clusters everywhere. The stage is in the rear, about a block from the entrance.

GREENE STREET, 101 Greene St. (925-2415)—This is such a gorgeous, thirties-ish movie set of a place that you expect gunmen to burst in at any moment. The restaurant-bar is about the size of a football field, with the piano at the fifty-yard line. If your seats are good enough, you'll hear some able entertainers, including **HAL SCHAEFER** (through Feb. 24) and **LYNN BERNSTEIN** (Feb. 26-27).

KILIMANJARO, 531 W. 19th St. (627-2333)—A recently opened, northern branch of the popular Washington, D.C., night spot. As the name suggests, African music is the sine qua non, be it live or d.j.-spun. Calypso, reggae, and world-beat formats also turn up; in any case, the huge dance floor seldom lies fallow. The reggae-rapper **SHINEHEAD** is here on Feb. 23. The singer, a.k.a. Carl Aiken, fuses the sounds of Jamaica, where he was born, with those of the Bronx, where he was raised, and throws in such pop influences as Sam Cooke and the Fab Four. The Zairean singer and composer **TABU LEY ROCHEREAU,** who has been one of Africa's premier pop stars since the sixties, claims Feb. 24.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark-wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass-figurine lamps. The musicians gather around the Steinway that sits in the dining room, but chin music is often the dominant sound. Feb. 20-24, the place belongs to **JOHN BUNCH,** a fine pianist who longs for the days when big bands roamed the earth and who has been known to work songs like "Alone Together" and "Can't We Be Friends" into his act. Performing with Mr. Bunch will be bassist **STEVE LA SPINA.** Music from nine-thirty.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. The **ORDINAIRES,** a category-bending ensemble with electrified violins and screaming guitars, perform on Feb. 23. They like to dress in stylishly nerdy suits and flapper dresses, and sometimes play a hair-raising version of Led Zeppelin's "Kashmir." Also: **MINIATURE** (with **TIM BERNE, HANK ROBERTS,** and **JOEY BARON**) on Feb. 21; **TOM CORA, MARC RIBOT,** and others on Feb. 22; and **MARC RIBOT'S ROOTLESS COSMOPOLITANS** on Feb. 25. Music after nine.

LAUTERBACH'S BROOKLYN BEAT, 335 Prospect Ave., at Sixth Ave., Brooklyn. (1-718 788-9140)—A grungy but well-intentioned watering hole devoted to homegrown Brooklyn bands. The emphasis here is on exposed cement, although one wall is decorated with Polaroids—"St. Patty's 1986" (people in green hats and leis), "New Year's 1988-89" (people in red hats and leis). Lauterbach's microwave menu includes shepherd's pie and chicken parmigiana, but the musical menu is almost always a better bet.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restaurant and bar featuring a load of snazzy Gibson guitars, some Washington Square-style portraits of folks like Bo Diddley and Dr. John, and funky French fry-potato chip hybrids. A bleary-eyed patron here was recently heard remarking, "I don't know about you people, but I'm feeling a lot of love in this room." **NILS LOFGREN,** who brings the New Keys here on Feb. 23, was a teen prodigy in the sixties and spent the seventies apparently deciding whether or not to become famous. Since then, Lofgren's work, particularly his songwriting and his guitar playing, has been well received and widely copied in pop circles. In 1984, when Bruce Springsteen hired him to play lead guitar for that travelling rock-and-roll institution known as the E Street Band, Lofgren became the band's first new member in ten years. Music after nine. Dining.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A good sound system, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the "Hoboken sound" and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Manhattanites who stay through the second set will need all their Scout training to get home, but the smell of the nearby Maxwell House factory may give them a boost. The **THROWING MUSES,** who'll be here Feb. 23, are a predominantly female quartet of manic neo-hillbillies who stomp all over rock's verse/verse/chorus conventions. Their last album, "Hunkpapa," was a surprisingly bright record, and when the group is at its best—as it almost always is—its live shows are wild and hypnotic.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A glossy, multilevel maroon-and-silver cabaret, seating about ninety, and located on the north side of the sixty-fifth floor in what used to be the cocktail lounge. The performers, working in a shallow well in the center of the room, do unwitting battle with the bejewelled backdrop of Central Park, Lenox Avenue, the G. W. Bridge, and points north. **ROSEMARY CLOONEY** is here through Feb. 24, backed up by an excellent sextet that includes **SCOTT HAMILTON, WARREN VACHÉ,** and **KEN PEPLOWSKI.** Ms. Clooney's latest tribute album for Concord, due out soon, tackles Rodgers, Hart, and Hammerstein, and her engagement here focusses on their material. She can't belt it out like she used to, but she wins you over with her warm, natural style and her disarming sense of humor. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. When the band is swinging, and you and your dreamboat are cheek to cheek, everything can seem just swell. "Another highball?" "Thanks ever so." **VINCE GIORDANO,** the slick-haired bassist, crooner, and conductor, is here with his **NIGHTHAWKS** every Monday and Tuesday, running through Fletcher Henderson and Hoagy Carmichael and other vintage stuff. Music from six on Sundays, from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays.

RITZ, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—A rock establishment where the customer is not always right. If you're willing to endure proof-of-drinking-age wristbands, primitive notions of crowd control, and a staff of "I breaka you face" security people, you'll find some of the

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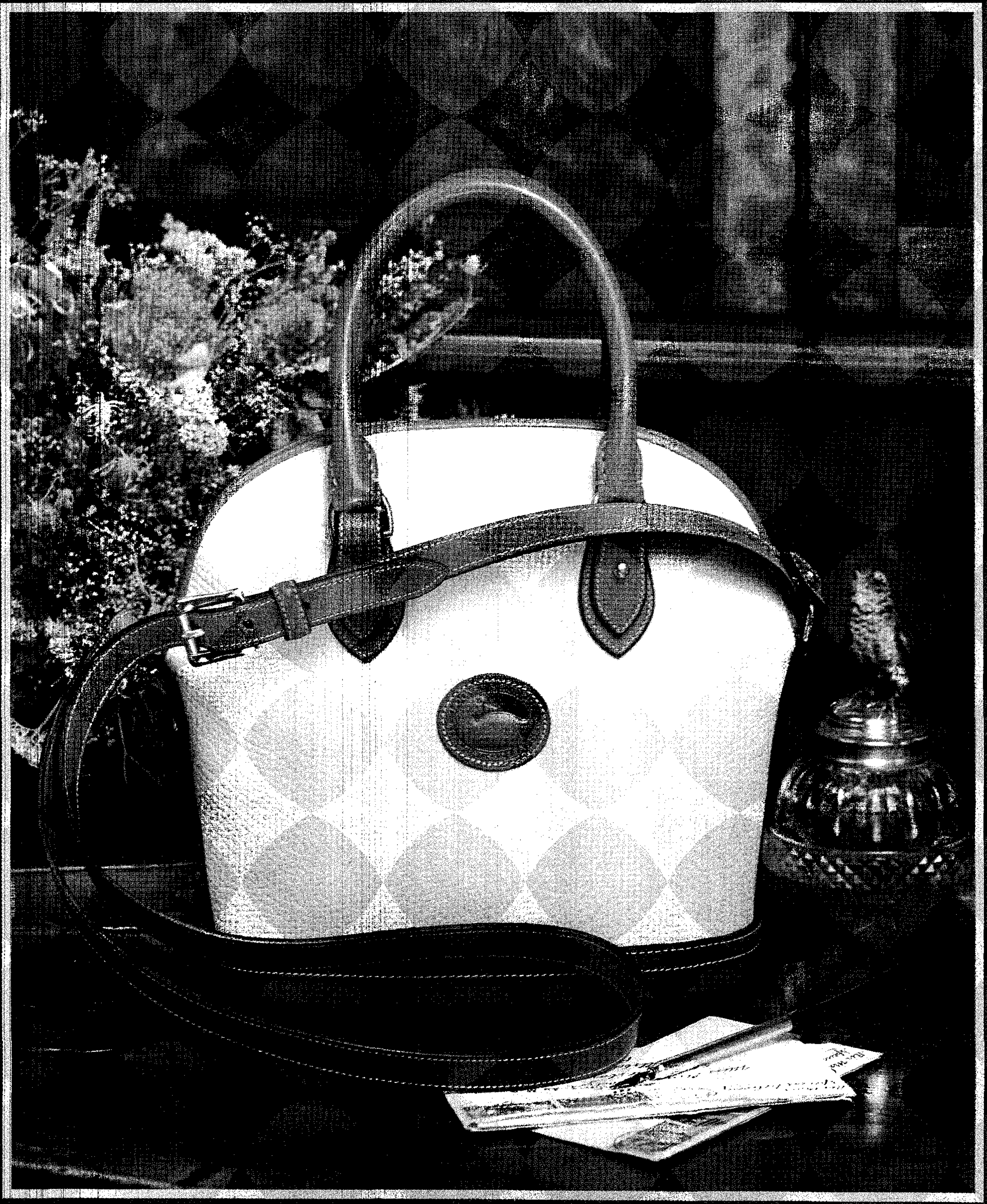
Photographer: Minh Nguyen



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LAS VEGAS, N.Y.

A wave of new neon is heading toward Times Square, and the first signs have already arrived, on the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, at 49th Street and Broadway. Sixty feet up from the pavement, two pink-and-white neon grids flank a field of twinkling red lights, across which the hotel's name is emblazoned in white. Beneath this spectacle lies a blank space; in a few months, a giant animated billboard will fill it. At that time, "you'll have to wear sunglasses around here," the building's architect, Alan Lapidus—the son of Morris Lapidus, who helped bring moderne glamour to Miami Beach—said recently.

Four more skyscrapers are rising nearby, and although they are not yet sparkling at night, they will be soon—zoning regulations require Times Square architecture to wear brilliant plumage. One of these new buildings, the Embassy Suites Hotel, already keeps its construction hoists lit and operating after dark. As the hoists rise and fall, they become subtle forerunners of the glitz to come: there will be three red neon stripes running to the tip of this forty-story tower. Now is a good time to visit the neighborhood, so your eyes can start adjusting.

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best rock bands around. Bronx-born guitarist **ACE FREHLEY**—who once said of Kiss, "If we can come up with special effects even more spectacular than fire-breathing or spouting synthetic blood, we'll try to phase it into the show"—will be here Feb. 23. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A big, cheerful room, painted a light tropical blue, where you can pick 'em up and set 'em down to sounds from Brazil, Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. Ample seating for the contemplative. **LINTON KWESI JOHNSON** performs Feb. 21-22, with Dennis Bovell and the Dub Band. Mr. Johnson sets "dub poetry" to reggae: his shows are danceable readings. **DR. JOHN,** the bearded, gravel-voiced boogie-woogie pianist, presides on Feb. 27. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays and from ten on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A trio consisting of **CEDAR WALTON, RON CARTER,** and **BILLY HIGGINS** holds sway here through Feb. 25. **STANLEY TURRENTINE,** a tenor saxophonist who came to prominence in the early sixties while on the road with the Max Roach quintet, starts up on Feb. 27. A big band under the direction of trumpeter Miles Evans is in action on Mondays. Shows from ten. Dining.

SWEETWATERS, 170 Amsterdam Ave., at 67th St. (873-4100)—Pink carnations on the tables, shrimp creole on the menu, a sunken dance floor with a "Saturday Night Fever" ball, and a house photographer who offers to take a picture of you and your lady. The stage, dominated by a white grand piano, is usually given over to soul and R. & B.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the gym-size downstairs room—which, with its black walls, black pillars, and black pipes and ducts, resembles a live-in Louise Nevelson sculpture—salsa bands pack them in on Mondays after nine. **MONGO SANTAMARIA, PONCHO SANCHEZ,** and guest soloist **STANLEY TURRENTINE** are here on Feb. 19, and Feb. 26 belongs to **TITO PUENTE, RAY BARRETTO,** and guest soloist **PAQUITO D'RIVERA.** Feb. 23-24, consummate soul man **WILSON** ("In the Midnight Hour") **PICKETT** takes charge. Shows at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—People from all over the world descend the stairs to this ancient jazz club; many of them later emerge from it in an excited condition. The Monday-night **JAZZ ORCHESTRA** that swung under the direction of the late **MEL LEWIS** is in residence through Feb. 25. The **SHIRLEY HORN** trio starts up on Feb. 27. Music from ten.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke-veggie entertainment. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad. A few of this week's bands (selected solely on the basis of their names): New Potato Caboose (Feb. 24) and Tigressa (Feb. 25).

ZANZIBAR & GRILL, 550 Third Ave., at 36th St. (779-0606)—Outside, the jungle that is New York throbs in its old heavy-handed way; inside, the ceiling fans turn slowly, the palm trees susurrate tropically, the jukebox plays Perez Prado and the Mills Brothers, and the customer is susceptible to fevered thoughts about going South, where he can do a little shelling and shuffleboarding. The musicians go to work around nine. **SONNY FORTUNE,** a man of many instruments (saxophones, flute, clarinet), whose style ranges from bebop to funk to free jazz, is here on Feb. 22, with pianist **DAVE JANEWAY,** bassist **CHIP JACKSON,** and drummer **DANNY GOTTLIEB.** Other attractions: pianist **STEVE KUHN'S** trio on Feb. 20-21; the **ROY GERSON** sextet on Feb. 23; and Lew Soloff, among others, on Feb. 24. Dining.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy, awninged eateries you've seen nestled between brownstones in the Village and always wondered about. Pianist **JOHN HICKS** and bassist **SANTI DEBRIANO** are at work through Feb. 24. Music weeknights from eight, and Sundays from seven.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

YOU can't keep a bad club down. The last time things flowed smoothly at the Roxy was when its patrons were on roller skates. Once the cavernous rink, on West 18th Street, was transformed into a dance palace, evenings became less hip and more hophead. The rink was a lousy surface for dancing, the lighting was all wrong, and the mood seemed leftover. The speakers blew. The place closed. Reopened as a completely new club called 1018, it had a launch party as flat as Billie Burke's aspic; it attracted, and then was spurned by, five different comp lists, and wound up with a reputation as carefree as that of a sock hop in a vacant lot under the Third Avenue Bridge—on the Bronx side. Some people danced. Some people were robbed. Some people were shot. The choice wasn't always yours.

Now born again as the Roxy, this twice-slugged phoenix is trying to rise with the help of anyone it can get. And that's who was invited on a recent Saturday. Bridge-and-tunnel people rubbed elbows with towering transvestites shaking their fake things against nude women with real ones; the women were ogled by guys in black who weren't supposed to care standing in the way of kids who were young enough to be the children of break dancers. And did this mélange become a melting pot of love, peace, and soul? Nope. More like a Susanne Bartsch party without Ms. Bartsch, the evening boasted eccentricity without direction, sporadic fun without momentum, desperate posing, straining narcissism, and a whole bunch of people saying, "Who are these people?" Only one group of guys was having any fun. The city's ace disco-towing contingent was hoisting up cars by the trailerload. "Hope this place stays open forever," said the man who almost towed our car. "All the parking around Quick! is legal."

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

ICE SHOW—"Walt Disney's Magic Kingdom on Ice" stars Pinocchio, who, along with Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse, has evidently learned to skate. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. Through Feb. 25. For information about show times and tickets, call 247-4777.)

KODO—Percussionists from Japan. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Feb. 20 at 7:30, Feb. 21-23 at 8, Feb. 24 at 2 and 8, and Feb. 25 at 3.)

"CROWBAR"—A play, of sorts, presented by En Garde Arts and performed in the old Victory Theatre, which has been empty for sixty years. The score is by David Van Tieghem. (209 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Tuesdays through Sundays at 8.)

"NEW WORKS, FIRST RUNS"—A program of short videotapes: "Blind Country," by Erika Beckman; "OnOurOwn," by Joe Gibbons, with Tony Oursler; "DiAna's Hair Ego: AIDS Info Up Front," by Ellen Spiro; "He Was Once," by Mary Hestand; and "Desire, Inc.," by Lynn Hershman. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. Tuesdays through Saturdays from 1 to 6. Through March 3.)

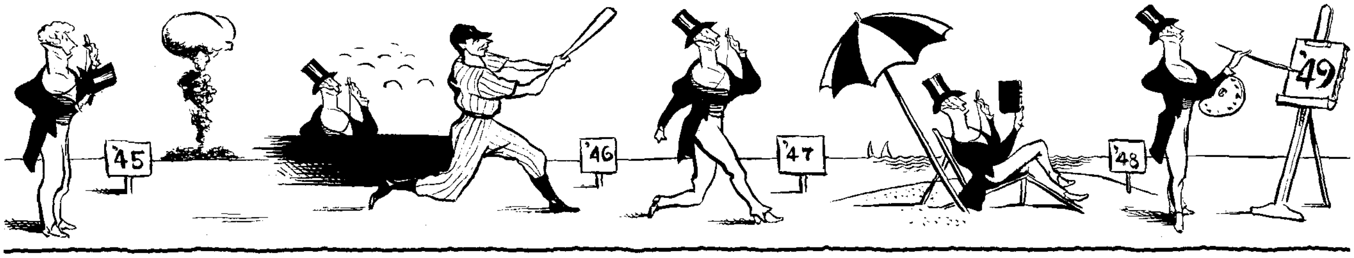
WATCHFACE—In their latest work, "White," which is about bigotry. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Feb. 21-24 at 8, and Feb. 25 at 3.)

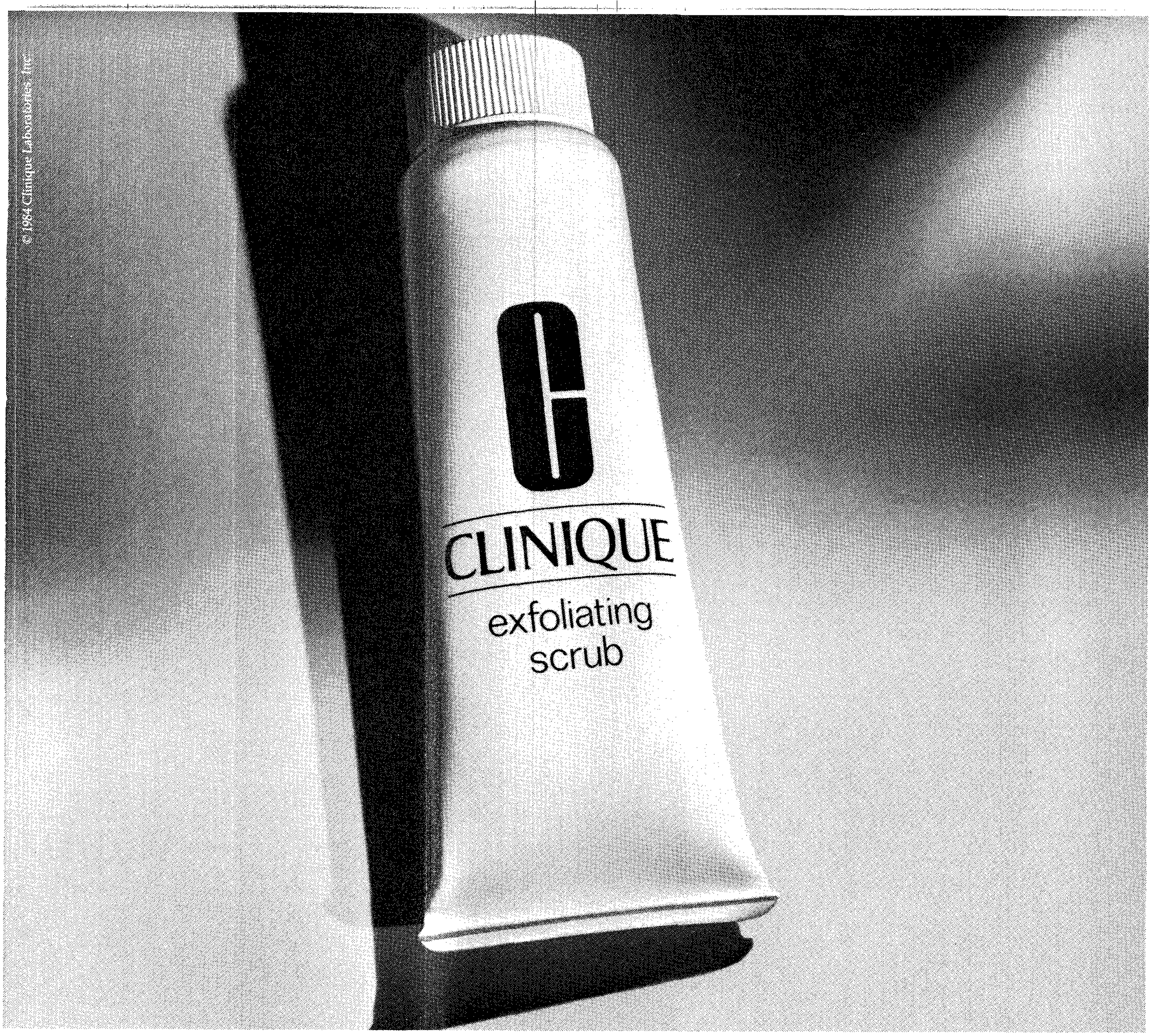
"BABEL STORIES"—A solo performance by Matthew Maguire that is part of a larger work, "The Tower." (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 333-7471. Feb. 23-24 at 11. Through March 9.)

TAMAR ROGOFF—In "To Sow and to Sweep," a dance piece about growing old that incorporates a film by Cathy Weis. (Midtown Y, 344 E. 14th St. 673-2207. Feb. 24-25 at 8.)

LA MAMA—Feb. 22-25 at 8: Lili Taylor in "Increase." Through March 4. . . . ¶ Feb. 22-24 at 10: Lois Weaver and Peggy Shaw in "Anniversary Waltz." (74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

P.S. 122—Feb. 22-25 at 9:30: Richard Elovich in his new work, "If Men Could Talk, the Stories They Could Tell." Through March 4. . . . ¶ Feb. 23-25 at 8: Pat Oleszko presents "Bluebeard's Hassle: The Writhes of the Wives." Through March 4. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)





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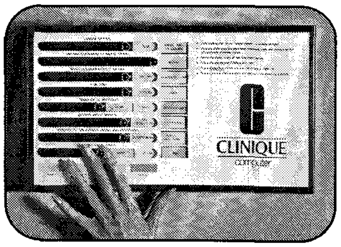

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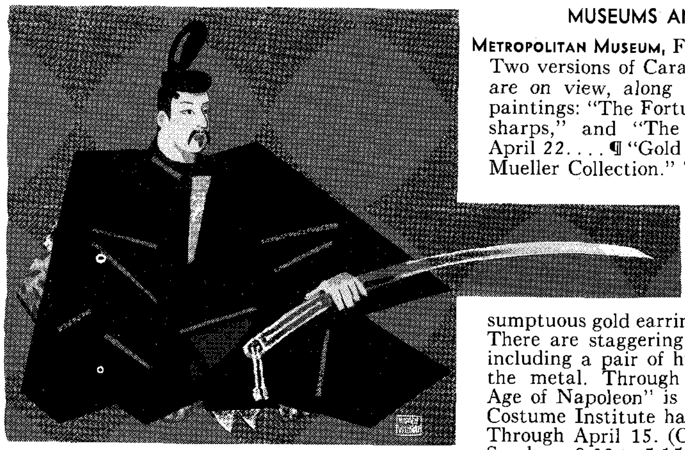


Samurai swords at Japan Society

ART

THE brilliant and irresistibly charming Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827) could easily have been invented by Henry Fielding: he might as well *be* Tom Jones. In fact, quite unconsciously at first, we even found ourself referring to Rowlandson as Tom. The two Toms may be a generation apart historically, but their life stories are miraculously similar. The child Rowlandson also suffered his father's bankruptcy and was raised in the country by a kind, wealthy uncle who eventually left him a fortune. Rowlandson also was a notorious womanizer in his youth, and a sensualist, and a gambler, and, it would appear, an all-around adorable rake. Prolific, too. There are probably some ten thousand Rowlandson prints and drawings in existence, many on unmistakably Fielding-like themes—a deliriously gluttonous after-the-hunt supper scene, for instance, like the one in "Tom Jones" the movie. In everything written about him, furthermore, and in everything he so fluently drew, we sense sweetness. Though known best as a satirist, Rowlandson is pretty affectionate in his sendups and caricatures. They point at foibles, not evil, and show none of Hogarth's bile.

One of the many ebullient works by Rowlandson now on view in a wonderful show at the Frick is a watercolor (circa 1790-1800) titled "A French Valet and English Lackey." The lackey, who evokes a shambling old hound dog, looks to his fellow-servant with dumb wonderment. The valet, *par contre*, sits daintily cross-legged, carefully coiffed, holding a demitasse, enunciating, gesticulating—and, inexplicably, he appears to be breasted. Revolution be damned! This *citoyen* has become Madame's own poodle.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Two versions of Caravaggio's "Lute Player" are on view, along with three other early paintings: "The Fortune Teller," "The Cardsharps," and "The Musicians." Through April 22. . . . ¶ "Gold of Africa: The Barbier-Mueller Collection." This cohesive show, assembled from a Swiss collection, demonstrates that the world's most fanciful gold rings come from Ghana, just as the largest and most sumptuous gold earrings are those from Mali. There are staggering amounts of gold here, including a pair of human jawbones cast in the metal. Through March 11. . . . ¶ "The Age of Napoleon" is the best exhibition the Costume Institute has put on in some time. Through April 15. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Photography Until Now," a show of nearly three hundred works, examines the technological, commercial, and creative developments that have shaped the medium over the past century and a half. Through May 29. . . . ¶ A retrospective of works by Robert Moskowitz includes window-shade collages from the early sixties, monochrome paintings from the early seventies, and more recent, large-scale paintings and pastels. Through May 1. . . . ¶ In Vernon Fisher's newest installation—a complicated amalgam of wall drawings, paintings, texts, surveyor's equipment, a mirror, a sliced wall, and an anamorphic projection of a Dalmatian—the Texas artist wittily and poetically examines the breakdown of theory by pitting systems of representation and thought against each other. Through March 6. . . . ¶ Photographs by Tina Barney. Through April 10. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Jenny Holzer illumines Mr. Wright's daunting space with her aphorisms, which are engraved on both red and white granite benches and displayed on a five-hundred-and-thirty-five-foot electronic message unit that follows the contours of the museum's spiralling wall. Through Feb. 25. (Another of Holzer's installation works, "Laments," can be seen at Dia Art Foundation, 548 W. 22nd St.) (Open Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Sculpture from 1965 to 1975 as represented by ten artists, among them Eva Hesse, Robert Smithson, Richard Serra, and Lynda Benglis. The first half of the show is already open on the second floor; the second half starts March 2. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"The Blue of Jingtai," a display of Chinese cloisonné vessels, mostly from the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1912). Nineteen-twelve is also the year these pieces entered the museum's collection. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—A show of six complete Ice Age skeletons—including those of two wolves, a sabre-toothed cat, and a giant thirty-five-hundred-pound sloth—that were exhumed from the La Brea Tar Pits, in Los Angeles. Through April 1. (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—There are some wonderful objects in "The Japanese Influence on American Ceramics" that emulate a Japanese shape, sense of color, or surface while retaining their own identity—a Fulper vase, a Ron Nagle pot, and a Betty Woodman basket, for example. But the vast majority of work in the show is nothing in the face of the real McCoy, which is occasionally exhibited alongside. Through March 25. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Art of Bhutan." Buddhist ritual objects in bronze, carved ivory, horn, and wood. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"The Art of Thomas Rowlandson." Through April 8. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—Nineteen paintings and twenty-three samurai swords and daggers constitute a show that demonstrates the relationship between the courtly brush and the martial blade in medieval Japan. Through April 8. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The Academy's hundred-and-sixty-fifth annual exhibition is a juried show that includes works in all mediums. Through March 7. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—Mary Kelly's installation on sexual politics contains, among other pieces, a history of the women's movement since 1968 presented on eight plates of stainless steel. Through April 8. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—Spring training for non-players in a show called "Diamonds Are Forever," which offers the reflections of contemporary authors and artists on that most American of pastimes: baseball. The parks, players, equipment, and action are all immortalized, by fans such as Claes Oldenburg, Edna Ferber, Nicholas Nixon, and Roger Angell. Through April 21. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 6.)

Queens Museum, Flushing Meadow Park—An exhibition of new British paintings. Through March 18. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5:30.)

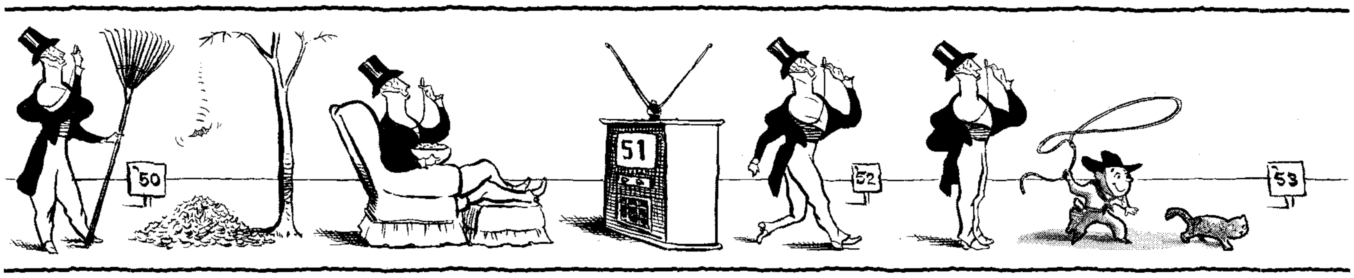
Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—A show of contemporary sub-Saharan African art that should inspire serious rethinking of such issues as cultural imperialism and the function of art within a society. Through May 6. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Joan Snyder—New paintings, most with velvet, many with nails, dowels, sticks, pipes, clamps, or wire. In these unabashedly emotional compositions, the artist alludes to totems, masks, cruciforms, moons, oceans, and figures in extremis, and she aspires to such exalted elegiac forms as requiems and cantatas. Through Feb. 28. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

Group Show—All of the Shepherd gallery's exhibitions have something to offer the seriously eclectic browser or nineteenth-century amateur—the setting alone prompts symbolist reveries. But the current show of works on paper from the late eighteenth century through the early twentieth is, relatively speaking, on the dry side. Still, "Death and the Girl," by Louis Legrand, is fun; the cat studies by Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen are,



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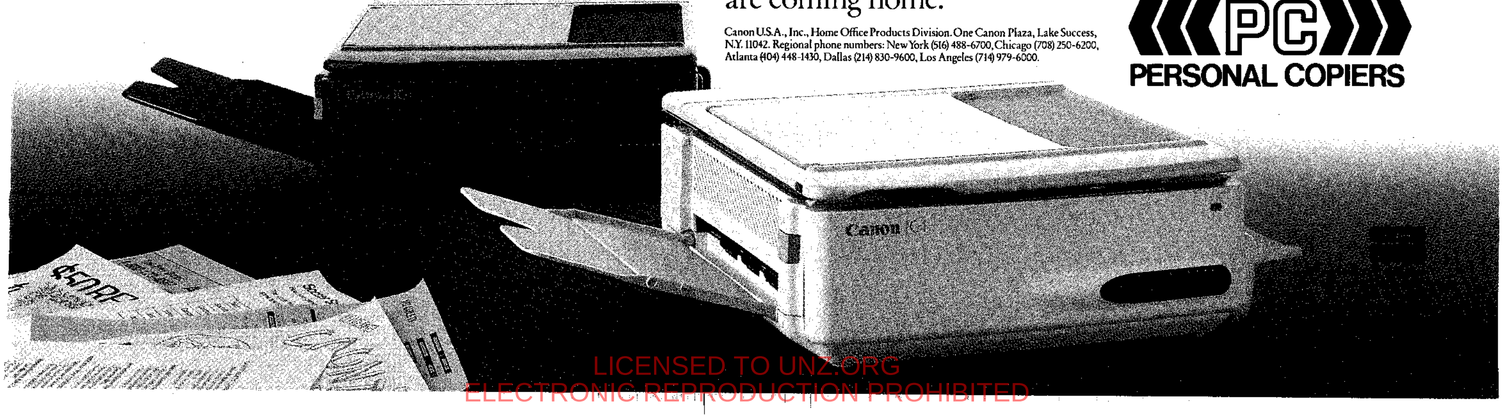

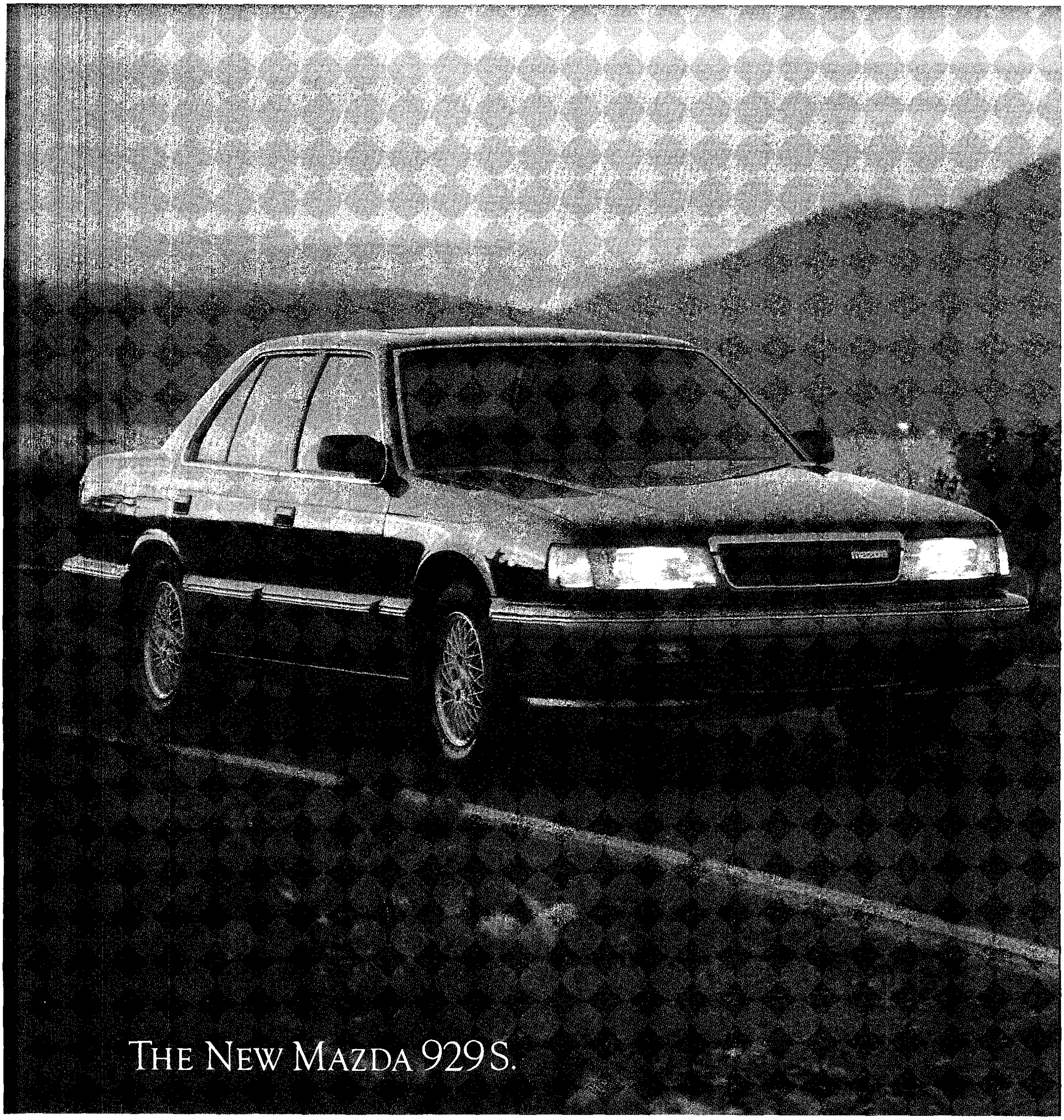

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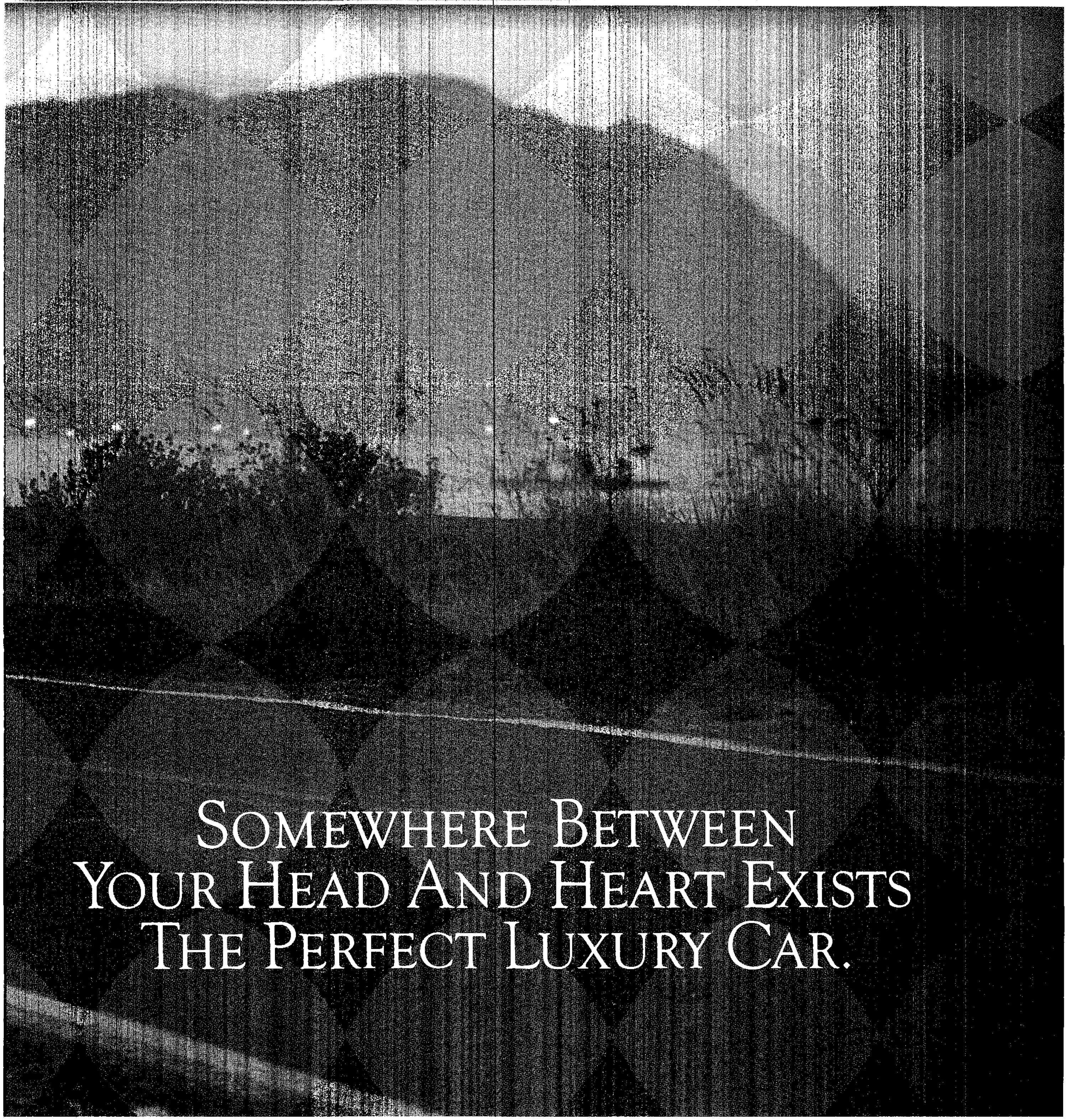
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ART—Cont'd

as always, wonderful; and a sweet, tiny landscape of the Roman Campagna by Edward Lear was, it would appear, once mailed to someone as a homemade get-well card. Through Feb. 27. (21 E. 84th St.)

Short List—**james grashow,** Stone, 48 E. 86th St. (through March 2); **neil jenney,** Mathes, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (through March 31).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

John Alexander—Expressionism, American-style. The show consists mostly of predictable landscape paintings of decadent swamps with a moon-bathed light and a voodoo atmosphere. The handful of landscapes with figures in them, such as "Hesitant Bride on the Verge of Dunking Her Monkey," are better. Best of all are the few pieces of social satire, particularly the artist's updating of "American Gothic," with Ivana and Donald surrounded by opulent Victorian furnishings in garish golden fluorescence. She looks like her body's on crooked; he looks like he just sucked a lemon. Prescient stuff? Through Feb. 24. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St.)

Bram Bogart / Terence La Noue—Three-dimensional paintings by a veteran Dutch-born artist. He uses "brushstrokes" so huge the drips look like elephant plops. Through Feb. 24. / And-the-kitchen-sink abstraction skillfully done with collaged surfaces that have been worked and worked, bright colors against dark grounds, snaking lines, masks. Some of the paintings are muddy, but usually they look like Klee grown up. Through March 3. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Steve Currie—Overcrafted organic sculpture. Through March 3. (Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Roy De Forest—New paintings, drawings, and painted sculptures by a king of Northern California funk. De Forest is a great humorist, and each of his characters is as busy as a one-man band. Through Feb. 28. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

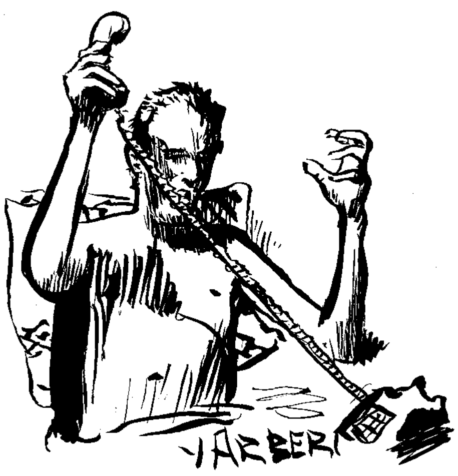
Martha Diamond—Recent paintings by an artist known for her broad, "artless" strokes. Her ostensible subject—the city today—is more specifically discernible than in earlier work, yet it continues to seem a pretext for something else that isn't quite clear yet. In "Carriage"—a rosy, feather-brushed horizon with a fluttering central blue—an abstract allegory seems to be forming. Through March 3. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Greg Drasler—Paintings of luggage—a nice idea stretched too thin. Through March 3. (Shea & Beker, 20 W. 57th St.)

Sondra Freckelton—Watercolors of zinnias on rocking chairs and begonias on quilts: it doesn't get cozier than this. Through March 14. (Schoelkopf, 50 W. 57th St.)

Stewart Hitch—Just when you thought this mid-career artist was going to make it to a ripe age by painting the same old starburst shapes, he's switched. In his new works, fields of floating squares and small circles activate the canvases, and the bright colors are cheery and light-filled. But somehow, when one considers composition and color together, the paintings appear both naïve and cynical. Through Feb. 24. (Siegel, 24 W. 57th St.)

Irving Petlin—Large, recent paintings in the artist's usual lyrical-symbolist style, and on his characteristic quasi-Biblical themes. One painting, for instance, is titled "Ensor à Jerusalem." It's hard to make up one's mind about Petlin. His delicate, Turneresque palette is luminescent, his desert landscape vistas are evocative, and his feeling for allegory is fetchingly idiosyncratic. Yet there is something tight and systematic—almost mincing—about these paintings that tends to preclude any emotional connection with them. Through Feb. 24. (Kent, 41 E. 57th St.)



Self-portrait by Robert Yarber

Gerhard Richter—In this artist's work the distinction between "objective" and "nonobjective" painting becomes the fool's conundrum it was always meant to be. For a long time now, Richter has alternately produced Photo-Realist works that look painterly and gestural abstractions that look photochemical. This paradox is carried to the breaking point in two shows of Richter's new work. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St., through March 1; and Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St., through Feb. 24.)

Robert Zakanitch—The newest paintings by this victim of the marketplace are a disappointment. Now Zakanitch is setting his flower patterns into landscapes and into baroque, illusionistic architectural paintings that recall postcards and doilied decorative plates. He can still paint rings around most Expressionists—for instance, he creates the most luscious leaves imaginable. If he could figure out the what as well as he has the how, he would be a formidable artist. Through Feb. 24. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Short List—**abe ajay,** Deutsch, 29 W. 57th St. (through Feb. 28); **alexander archipenko,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through March 17); **jim dine,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through March 31); **peter loftus** and **lois dodd,** Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. (through Feb. 28); **loren madsen,** McKee, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 17); **giorgio morandi,** Daverio, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 10); **josé maría sicilia,** Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (through March 17); **antoni tàpies,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through March 23).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Nassos Daphnis / Robert Therrien—In "Thirty Years with Leo Castelli" Daphnis never wavers from his bold, bright, geometric route, and indeed all the paintings and structures here look energetic and good. / As he tries different formats, Therrien's work gets weirder. In this rear-gallery show of recent pieces, there's a big chrome-yellow wall relief that includes a shape like an abstract mustache; a metal sculpture resembling an elongated waste bucket that is painted white on the outside; and an irregular steel wall grid that has the disorienting effect of a willfully loose handshake. Through Feb. 24. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

Don Eddy—This painter has held on to his Photo-Realist technique, but perhaps his faith is wavering. Hidden behind the blankness of his new paintings is a touch of melancholy. It can be sensed in the produce on his shelves (especially the ubiquitous red peppers), which are neither succulent nor iconographically challenging. It's somewhat more complex in his visually flat wreaths of foods around picture-postcard scenes of Tuscany and the Caribbean, which suggest an autobiography of sorts. Through Feb. 28. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Suzan Etkin—The intervention of the hand in these constructions is sometimes so slight that the results can be bland, but more often than not Etkin comes up with a situation of quiet mystery, especially when she uses lights. A standing microphone whose mesh screen is lit, some portable flashlights pointed toward the cut-out circular center of a glass panel, and the lines of fluorescent light that pierce the mirrored faces of three tall, skinny boxes are as much about sexual identity and penetration as about the formal structure of art. Through March 10. (Audiello, 142 Greene St.)

Peter Halley—A show of small "Kodaliths" that provides an interesting coda to Halley's brilliant December show of big paintings, at Sonnabend. Through Feb. 24. (303 Gallery, 127 Spring St.)

Jane Hammond—One painting looks like an Alfred Jensen, another like an Elizabeth Murray. But they are weak paintings—like mirages—that collapse under the weight of their own opportunism. Through March 3. (Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St.)

Magdalena Jetelová—This Czech artist freshly portrays the ephemerality of art with two room-size sculptures. The more straightforward one consists of a photograph of an inverted triangle, a dirt-covered triangular wall propped against a nearby corner, and a laser beam, which is programmed to travel up the photograph and creep across the wall, going from the photographic form to the sculptural one. Through Feb. 24. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

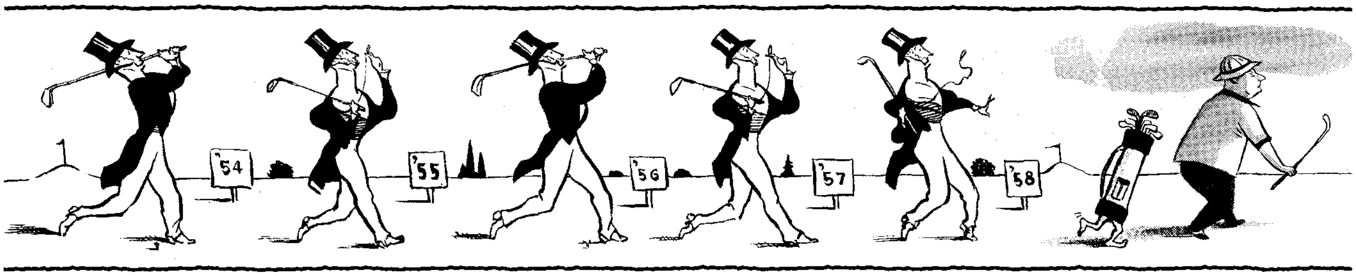
Donald Lipski—Sealed sentiment by the wittiest artist around, in the form of a surrealistic bud vase—a chain of roses laid bud to stem in two glass tubes filled with water that cut across the floor and up the wall of a dramatic skylighted room. Through Feb. 24. (Lorence-Monk, 578 Broadway.)

Donald Moffett—This artist presents his own angry, Krugeresque sayings, fuelled by homophobic reactions to the AIDS crisis, in a most effective, sometimes chilling, corporate-futuristic way. Each word is presented as a photographic transparency on the face of a circular light box, and each sentence is arranged in a crisp line or circle. One seems to be a biting attack on condemnations of ACT UP demonstrations: "I Spoke with Your God. He Commands Me to Cut Out Your Mouth." The statement "You and Your Kind Are Not Wanted Here" greets the visitor. "Lick" bids one goodbye. Through March 3. (Wessel O'Connor, 580 Broadway.)

Vik Muniz—The more enigmatic pieces in this moody, somewhat zany show include a marble cinder block propped up by a cement one, and a photograph of a sofa mounted low on the wall and supported by actual furniture legs. Through Feb. 24. (Stux, 155 Spring St.)

Joel Otterson—An often marvellous artist who sometimes gets carried away with pure shtick. In this new show, for instance, the pièce de résistance is a big, automatized Craftmatic bed with a disco sound system for a headboard, and a canopy and coverlet made of hideous, vaguely funereal, glitzy fabric. It's startling and kind of great for a second, then creepy and sad, and finally very conflicted in its implicit messages. There's another, more focussed piece with AIDSian connotations: a group of rococo chairs embroidered with the words "Cura Te Ipsum" and flanked by baskets of healthful fruit. Through March 3. (Gorney, 100 Greene St.)

Robert Rauschenberg—This potpourri of paintings does not make any real point, but it includes a dynamite work from 1965, which



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has the kind of street energy that made this artist famous. By the seventies, many Rauschenberg devotees became disillusioned with the artist's seemingly endless reworking of what had become disengaged media images in soft-focus colors, but the three works from that decade on view here have a serenity and elegance that set them miles apart from the younger generation of media artists they apparently influenced. Through March 3. (Lang & O'Hara, 568 Broadway.)

Salvatore Scarpitta—Work spanning three decades, by an artist who has consistently brought the intense energy and muscularity of Abstract Expressionism to sculptural objects. Some consist of heavy, construction-weight canvas wrapped tautly around rectangular framing devices; they have the feverish intensity of tourniquets applied on the battlefield. The standing and propped sleds on display are vehicles for the imagination and suggest a means of salvation. Through Feb. 24. (Hanson, 415 West Broadway.)

Gary Stephan—A grand show in which the artist's leitmotiv—a shape resembling dark eyeglasses—appears as linear riffs of unfurling ribbons, sheriff's badges, dumbbells, and telephones. Through Feb. 24. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Alan Turner—"Pin the nose on the lady" seems to be the bizarre game in these deadpan, slightly repulsive canvases of women with lips where their ears should be, nicely painted in dry fresco colors. Through Feb. 24. (Koury Wingate, 578 Broadway.)

David von Schlegell—Paintings, by a sculptor, that resemble photographs in faded monochrome colors. There is no gesture or image, and little point to any of them. Through Feb. 28. (Viafora, 568 Broadway.)

Allan Wexler—If you consider your life complete with a sturdy table and chair and a full cup of coffee, then this artist is your champion. In drawings, paintings, sculptures, and constructions he does *everything* imaginable with those existential common denominators. Many of the works are downright funny in their art-concept commentary, such as "Site-Specific Furniture," in which a small table and a set of chairs are supported by sticks. Wexler has a tendency to undermine his work when he gets punch-drunk on his puns, but even then he can be endearing: the silhouette of a table cooked onto pancakes. Through March 10. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

Robert Yarber—This artist has spent more than a decade depicting figures falling through the air as if they had just jumped out of skyscraper windows, and for much of that time the recurring motif has seemed redundant. But such paintings are now so lush and seductive, who cares? Yarber portrays sparkly "Million Dollar Movie" city light and its reflection on the water like no one else. In today's Europhilic art scene he is perhaps the sole champion of the American regionalist spirit, but in one painting he even lets his brush run loose, as if he were an abstractionist. In three paintings of interior scenes—which are less assured—he is working toward the kind of penetration of deep, dark space mastered by Tintoretto. Through Feb. 24. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

"Storyline"—An exemplary show of narrative paintings, with an unexpected range of peculiar and provocative juxtaposition. It includes Neil Jenney's "Fish and Pole" (1969), which is a funny portrait of a battle with no survivors; Jan Müller's "The Search for the Unicorn" (1957); and Mark Tansey's "Homage to Susan Sontag" (1982). Through March 3. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Short List—**claudia hart**, Hearn, 39 Wooster St. (through March 3); **gary kuehn**, Roeder, 545 Broadway (closed Tuesdays, through Feb. 28); **guillermo kuitca**, Nosei, 100 Prince St. (through Feb. 24); **françois morellet**, Facchetti, 476 Broadway (through Feb. 24); **giulio paolini**, SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St. (through Feb. 24); **ed paschke**, Kind, 136 Greene St. (through March 14); **han schuil**, Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway (through March 24); **jaune quick-to-see smith**, Steinbaum, 132 Greene St. (through March 6); **t. l. solien**, Walls, 137 Greene St. (through March 3); **richard tuttle**, Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through Feb. 28); **charmion von wiegand**, Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through March 14); **troels wörsel**, Nolan, 560 Broadway (through March 3).

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

OTHER GALLERIES

Orshi Drozdik—A quirky, mixed-media installation inspired by Linnaeus's study of the sexuality of plants. The scientist's classifications are etched into glass plaques. Old pages of pressed plants seem to be the progenitors of a silk curtain, somewhat like Robert Gober's genitalia wallpaper, on which the artist drew pairs of trees. The implications for human sexuality seem at once rich and nonexistent. Drozdik's mind has an interesting, elliptical slant, but this show is a little limp. Through Feb. 24. (Cugliani, 508 Greenwich St., at Spring St.)

"Contemporary Illustrated Books: Word and Image, 1967-1988"—What we find in the best of the many wonderful books in this exhibition of *livres d'artistes* is the realization of a certain type of dream: art and literature in relationships so complex, particular, dynamic, and responsive that they can be seen as ideal metaphors for unions of any kind, not least marriage. Jasper Johns' intense, reserved etchings for Samuel Beckett's "Foirades/Fizzles," for instance, provide a sensual analogue for an introspective mind, and Francesco Clemente's sweeping, suffusing lithographs join with Alberto Savinio's "The Departure of the Argonaut" to form a passionately conflicted duet. A more workmanlike collaboration between Alexander Liberman and the poet Andrey Voznesensky results in a lush, abstract example of civilized cohabitation. Many more playful, more formally eccentric, or more stringently contemporary visual designs by others, including Daniel Buren, Larry Rivers, Lucas Samaras, Ronald King, Dotty Attie, and Susan Weil and Marjorie Van Dyke (for James Joyce's "Epiphanies"), are, in their varied ways, as exhilarating. Through Feb. 28. (Franklin Furnace, 112 Franklin St. Opens at noon.)

Small Works Show—This annual competition provides a chance to see works in many mediums by two hundred and sixty-seven young artists, as "edited" by the art supermarketer Ivan Karp. It's the closest the legitimate art world gets to the Greenwich Village sidewalk exposition. Through March 9. (80 Washington Square East Galleries, New York University.)

Short List—**gloria garfinkel**, Ryan, 452 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. (opens at noon, through March 10); **leon golub**, Baer, 270 Lafayette St. (through March 21); **alan saret**, P.S. 1, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City (opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays, through March 11).

PHOTOGRAPHY

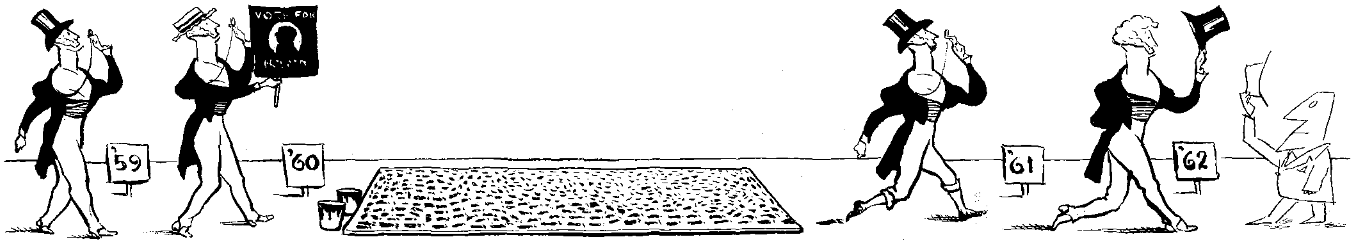
Hanging over Peter Hujar's exhibition, at New York University's Grey Art Gallery, is an atmosphere of terrible loss—the loss of this serious, productive photographer, who died because of AIDS, and the loss, also from AIDS, of a noticeable number of the people he portrayed so knowingly. These deaths make this large show an event that resonates with sadness—there is an almost palpable sense of absence.

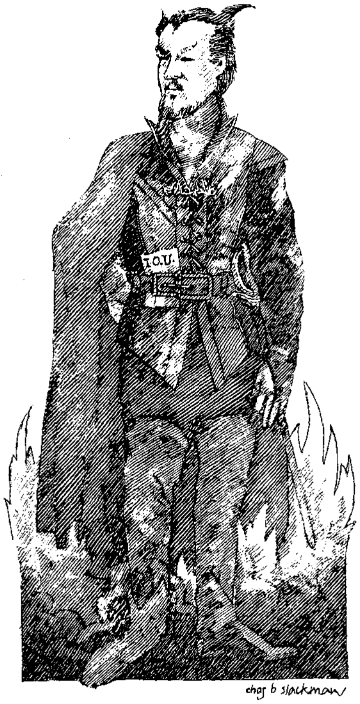
The exhibition also demonstrates Hujar's broad and deep range. We get to see something we haven't had much of a chance to discover with Hujar until now: his style. That style was subtle and, because he made so many different kinds of pictures, not immediately obvious. On a second viewing of the exhibition, Hujar's style comes across with more impact.

Holding all these pictures together is a lack of exaggeration, a feeling of intimacy, and a photographic intelligence. We knew about those qualities in Hujar's portraits, but this retrospective offers the opportunity to observe them in his other work, too. His photographs of animals, for instance, display a characteristic understatedness that allows individuality to come through. The sheep, the goat, the horses, the goose, and the Shar-Pei puppy that Hujar photographed aren't made cute or beautified; they are portrayed as subjects as worthy of particular attention as, say, Diana Vreeland. In a wonderful photograph titled "Electric Cow," the foreground cow's eyes are popping, probably owing to the shock of the flashbulb; her ears are flapped open like speakers around a record-player. Her whole being seems alert to the fact that she's being photographed, and she doesn't like the process any more than most of the rest of us do.

"The Indomitable Spirit"—Most of the ninety-four artists represented have created works specifically for this show—a photographic response to AIDS. Among the contributors are John Baldessari, Cindy Sherman, and Louise Lawler. Through April 7. (International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6.)

Short List—**peter campus**, Cooper, 155 Wooster St. (through Feb. 24); **adam fuss**, Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 3); **peter hujar**, Grey Art Gallery, 33 Washington Pl. (opens at 1 on Saturdays, through Feb. 24); **arthur leipzig**, Photofind, 138 Spring St. (through March 17); **marcia lippman**, Staley-Wise, 177 Prince St. (opens at noon, through March 31).





James Morris in the Met's "Faust"

MUSIC

AMONG classically trained musicians today, only organists are still systematically taught to improvise. They have a practical reason (the need to adapt to the length of a procession, an offering collection, or whatnot) and a long tradition. In other branches of performance, improvisation has lapsed, though singers, violinists, and, most copiously of all, keyboard players of all kinds practiced it regularly in the nineteenth century and before. It's a pity, because the combination of disciplined mastery and spontaneous creativity in really good improvisation has an excitement unlike anything else, and it conveys a special spirit to the unimprovised parts of a performance as well. (Audiences who have heard Robert Levin improvise his hair-raising cadenzas in Mozart's piano concertos, as he did at the Ann Arbor Mozartfest last year, will know this well.)

Sometimes in the preludes of Bach or the fantasias of Mozart, we seem to be given a glimpse of what their impromptu playing might have been like. For a very few twentieth-century pianist-composers—among them Isaac Albéniz and Charles Ives—we can actually listen, via primitive recordings, to improvisation in progress. Popular-culture musicians have kept right along improvising, and George Gershwin, who had a foot in each camp, was celebrated for playing spontaneous variations on his songs—mostly at parties, but occasionally for recordings through which one can still eavesdrop on the fun.

Artis Wodehouse, a pianist-scholar based on the West Coast, has had a further idea: writing down the Gershwin improvisations and publishing them for others to play. (She has even found a way to hook up the piano-roll mechanism to a music-notation software program for computer transcription.) Is it quite proper to play someone else's improvisation? We're not sure, but we have enjoyed toying with some of Ms. Wodehouse's transcriptions at our own piano, and look forward to hearing her play some of them (along with the familiar "Rhapsody in Blue") on February 25 at Merkin Concert Hall.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5440. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**MANON LESCAUT,** with Mirella Freni, Peter Dvorsky, J. Patrick Raftery, and Italo Tajo; conducted by Nello Santi. (Feb. 19 and Feb. 23 at 8.) . . . **RIGOLETTO,** with June Anderson, Brigitta Svendén, Luciano Pavarotti, and Leo Nucci; Marcello Panni. (Feb. 20 at 8 and Feb. 24 at 1:30.) . . . **SAMSON ET DALILA,** with Shirley Verrett, Placido Domingo, Alain Fondary, and Michael Devlin; Charles Dutoit. (Feb. 21 and Feb. 24 at 8.) . . . With Shirley Verrett, Gary Lakes, and Gregg Baker; Charles Dutoit. (Feb. 28 at 8.) . . . **FAUST,** a new production, with Barbara Daniels, Neil Shicoff, Vernon Hartman, and James Morris; Charles Dutoit. (Feb. 22 at 8.) . . . With Barbara Daniels, Neil Shicoff, Thomas Hampson, and James Morris; Charles Dutoit. (Feb. 27 at 8.) . . . **DIE ENTFÜHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL,** with Mariella Devia, Barbara Kilduff, Stanford Olsen, and Lars Magnusson; James Levine. (Feb. 26 at 8.)

AMERICAN CHAMBER OPERA COMPANY—Presenting the final performances of "Dr. Heidegger's Fountain of Youth," by Jack Beeson and Sheldon Harnick, and the première of "Peronelle," by Larry Lipkis and Barry Spacks. Both of the operas will be fully staged. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. Feb. 23-24 at 8. For information about tickets, call 781-0857.)

JUILLIARD AMERICAN OPERA CENTER—Presenting two one-act operas, both in English: the U.S. première of "Rothschild's Violin," by Dmitri Shostakovich and Benjamin Fleischmann; and "The Seven Deadly Sins," by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Feb. 23 at 8, Feb. 25 at 3, and Feb. 27 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-7515.)

OPERA ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK—Eve Queler conducting the New York première of Tchaikovsky's "Maid of Orleans," sung in Russian. The soloists are Marvis Martin, soprano; Dolora Zajick, mezzo-soprano; Oleg Kulko, tenor; Jorma Hynninen, baritone; and Gleb Nikovsky, bass. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 28 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—At Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 20 at 8: Erich Leinsdorf conducting works by Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Virgil Thomson, and Tchaikovsky. With Yefim Bronfman, piano. . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 8, Feb. 23 at 2, Feb. 24 at 8, and Feb. 27 at 7:30: Zubin Mehta conducting works by Haydn, Bruch, Lutoslawski, and Kodály. With Anne-Sophie Mutter, violin.

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA—Klaus Tennstedt conducting Mahler's Sixth Symphony. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 20 at 8.)

CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA—At Carnegie Hall. Feb. 22 at 8: Christoph von Dohnányi conducting. With Mitsuko Uchida, piano. . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 8: Vladimir Ashkenazy conducting. With Daniel Majeske, violin.

MUSIC FROM JAPAN—Presenting the Brooklyn Philharmonic in a program of symphonies by five contemporary Japanese composers. Lukas Foss will conduct the orchestra, and the soloists will be pianists Aki Takahashi and Frederic Rzewski. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 23 at 8.)

STUTTGART CHAMBER ORCHESTRA—Leon Fleisher conducting a program of music by Mozart, Bartók, and Grazyna Bacewicz. With John O'Conor, piano. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 23 at 8.)

NEW YORK YOUTH SYMPHONY—Samuel Wong conducting. With Mark Peskanov, violin. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 25 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

JUILLIARD ORCHESTRA—Stanislaw Skrowaczewski conducting a program of music by Weber, Bartók, and Bruckner. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 26 at 8.)

PHILHARMONIA VIRTUOSI—Richard Kapp conducting music by Haydn, Britten, Weber, and Karl Dittersdorf. With David Bilger, trumpet; Daniel Goldberg, clarinet; Thomas Young, tenor; and Carolyn Davis, double bass. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Feb. 27 at 8.)

VERDI'S "REQUIEM"—James Litton conducting. The soloists will be Gale Limansky, soprano; Gwendolyn Jones, mezzo-soprano; Charles Walker, tenor; and Richard Crist, bass-baritone. With the St. Bartholomew's Choir, and William Trafka, organ. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Feb. 21 at 8. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.)

"GIRL CRAZY"—A concert performance of George and Ira Gershwin's Broadway musical. With William Sharp, Gweneth Bean, and Kim Criswell in the key roles. Also, Michael Barrett and Steven Blier, piano. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. 242-4770. Feb. 24 at 8 and Feb. 25 at 5. . . . ¶ A fuller-blown production with the same cast. Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 26 at 8.)

ST. CECILIA CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA—David Randolph directing works by Vivaldi and Duruflé. With Xiaoping Hu, soprano; Trudy Weaver, mezzo-soprano; Robert Guarino, tenor; and William Metcalf, baritone. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Feb. 25 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

RECITALS

ALEXANDER STRING QUARTET—Performing works by Schumann and Janáček. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Feb. 20 at 6. Admission by contribution.)

CHELSEA CHAMBER ENSEMBLE—Playing works by Telemann and Mozart, among others. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Feb. 20 at 8.)

LEONIDAS KAVAKOS—Violin. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 20 at 8.)

OMEGA—Playing chamber music by Mozart, Chopin, and Messiaen. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 20 at 8.)

PARNASSUS—A chamber ensemble, conducted by Anthony Korf, in contemporary works by Americans. With Mark Bleeke, tenor. (Miller

Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 20 at 8.)

Daniel Barenboim—Piano, performing the complete Goldberg Variations. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 21 at 8.)

Haroutune Bedelian and Gerald Robbins—Violin and piano. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 21 at 8.)

Chanticleer—An a-cappella group singing works by Ligeti, David Carlson, and Josquin des Prez. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 21 at 8.)

New York University Chamber Music Society—Presenting chamber music by Eastern European composers. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 22 at 8.)

Edmund Niemann and Nurit Tilles—Duo piano. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. 242-4770. Feb. 22 at 8.)

Janos Starker—Cello. (Metropolitan Museum. Feb. 22 at 8.)

George Rochberg Tribute—The composer's seventieth birthday is honored with a performance by the New York Chamber Ensemble. The program will include works by Rochberg, Haydn, and Wagner. (Florence Gould Hall, French Institute–Alliance Française, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Feb. 23 at 8.)

Nigel Rogers and Paul O'Dette—Tenor and lute. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 23 at 8.)

Galimir String Quartet—Playing works by Beethoven, Dvořák, and Ravel. With Stephanie Brown, piano. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. 580-0210. Feb. 23 at 8. . . . ¶ Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Feb. 24 at 8. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Beaux Arts Trio—Playing music by Haydn, Smetana, Copland, and Brahms. (Metropolitan Museum. Feb. 23-24 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Members of the society playing music by Brahms, Haydn, Chopin, and Schumann. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 23 at 8, Feb. 24 at 2, and Feb. 25 at 5.)

Malcolm Frager—Piano. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 24 at 8.)

Boston Shawm and Sackbut Ensemble—In a program titled "Renaissance Tapestries." (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 24 at 8.)

Chester String Quartet—Playing music by Haydn, Britten, and Dvořák. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Feb. 25 at 2. For information about tickets, call 741-5689.)

Partita Chamber Ensemble—In a program of works by Mozart, Britten, Louis Spohr, and Linda Bouchard. (Florence Gould Hall, French Institute–Alliance Française, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Feb. 25 at 2.)

Artis Wodehouse—Piano. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 25 at 3.)

Arleen Augér—Soprano. With Irwin Gage, piano. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 25 at 8.)

Frederica von Stade—Mezzo-soprano. With Martin Katz, piano. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 25 at 8.)

Canadian Brass—Playing music by Purcell, Gabrielli, Bach, and Barber. (Metropolitan Museum. Feb. 25-26 at 8.)

Vladimir Feltsman—Piano. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 26 at 8.)

Barbara Held—Flute. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 334-0216. Feb. 27 at 8.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—With Bennett Lerner, piano. (Merkin Hall. Feb. 27 at 8.)

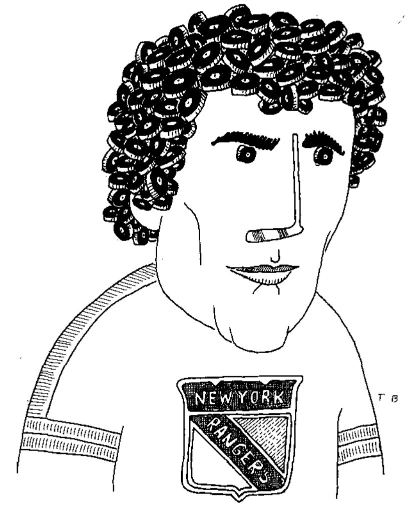
Boston Camerata—Joel Cohen directing a program of love songs from the Middle Ages. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 28 at 8.)

Heinz Holliger and John Ritter—Oboe and piano. (Metropolitan Museum. Feb. 28 at 8.)

Luciano Pavarotti—Tenor. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 28 at 9.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Richard Thompson—Everybody says he's a brilliant songwriter; everybody says he's a breathtaking guitarist; and everybody says he's the most self-effacing figure in music. Everybody's a critic. For more than twenty years Thompson has been lauded in the music press as one of the best and the brightest, and although people have heard of him, very few have heard him. His 1988 album "Amnesia" is an excellent introduction to his work—tough, earthy singing and lean guitar solos are his specialty—and this show is a wonderful opportunity to kick back and listen up. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Feb. 21 at 8.)



Roger Neilson of the Rangers

Paul Winter Consort—There's no getting around this soprano saxophonist's unashamed musical prettiness, religiosity, and environmental programming. (His performances are often recorded alfresco, beside a burbling stream, and sometimes combined with dolphin songs or wolf howls.) His music is either cloying and overdetermined or inspiring and moving, according to taste. Although his place in the New Age bin is not undeserved, Winter does not belong in the genre's Muzak precincts. To many, his work is a pleasing and right-thinking combination of light jazz and pro-conservation propaganda. With the Grateful Dead's Mickey Hart, Pé-De-Boi, and others. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. Feb. 23 at 8; Feb. 24 at 2 and 8.)

Bob James—A pianist, arranger, and commercial-jazz producer who has been unrolling his mildly funky aural wallpaper for a couple of decades now. His œuvre has some satisfyingly jungly, Rousseau-like patches and many, many Day-Glo-on-black-velvet swatches of mood jazz. When thinking about Bob James, it's hard not to remember a lot of generally forgettable parties back in the seventies, and the way his music sounded from a distance, away from the party, out in the fresh air on the balcony. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Feb. 24 at 8.)

"Lyrics and Lyricists"—This year's series is devoted to works by Cole Porter. With Karen Mason, Mary Cleere Haran, Jeff Harnar, and others. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Feb. 25 at 2:30 and 8, and Feb. 26 at 2 and 8.)

"Heavenly Jazz"—Presenting Kirk Lightsey and Frank Wess. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. Feb. 25 at 5. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

The Kitchen—Feb. 22-23: Nicolas Collins, Guy Klucevsek, the Soldier String Quartet, and others. With Joey Baron on Feb. 22 and Manos Tsangaris on Feb. 23. . . . ¶ Feb. 24-25: George Lewis and others in "The Empty Chair," a music-computer-video work. (512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Evenings at 8:30.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Rangers—Vs. the Devils, Feb. 19 at 1:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Boston Bruins, Feb. 26 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Capitals, Feb. 28 at 7:30.

Islanders—Vs. the Detroit Red Wings, Feb. 24. . . . ¶ Vs. the Devils, Feb. 25. (Game time, 2:05.)

Devils—Vs. the Winnipeg Jets, Feb. 22 at 7:45. . . . ¶ Vs. the Chicago Black Hawks, Feb. 24 at 1:35.

Knicks—Vs. the Detroit Pistons, Feb. 25 at noon. . . . ¶ Vs. the Dallas Mavericks, Feb. 27 at 8.

Nets—Vs. the Minnesota Timberwolves, Feb. 21 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Houston Rockets, Feb. 23 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Chicago Bulls, Feb. 25 at 3.

(The Devils and the Nets play at the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-3900; the Rangers and the Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 563-8300; and the Islanders play at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 422-9222.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights, except Wednesdays, at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . ¶ At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

Indoor Track—Finals of the U.S.A./Mobil indoor track meet start at 7:20 on Feb. 23 at Madison Square Garden. Finalists may include Leroy Burrell, Vickie Huber, Antonio McKay, Bicrica Ghican, Steve Scott, Doug Padilla, Ray Brown, and Brian Abshire.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

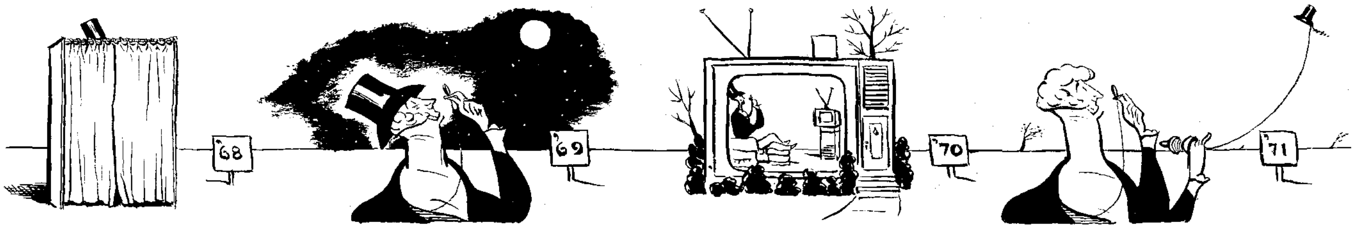
"The Art Show"—For five days this month, the Seventh Regiment Armory turns into an art department store. Sixty-four dealers exhibit their paintings, drawings, sculptures, prints, and photographs, on white walls that break up the massive space into boutique-size units: a heady atmosphere in which to mingle and browse. (Park Ave. at 66th St. The proceeds from tickets, which are sold at the door, benefit the Henry Street Settlement. Feb. 22-23, from noon to 8; Feb. 24-25, from 11 to 7; and Feb. 26, from 11 to 6.)

"In Defense of Cities"—A lecture by Brendan Gill. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Feb. 22 at 5. No tickets necessary.)

Antiquarian Book Fair—Scavengers and bookworms who have exhausted the possibilities of Grandma's attic should rummage around at the fair, where rare and ancient volumes, as well as collectible postcards and comic books, have found a temporary resting place. (P. S. 3, at 490 Hudson St., between Christopher and Grove Sts. Feb. 23, from 6 to 10; Feb. 24, from noon to 7; and Feb. 25, from noon to 5.)

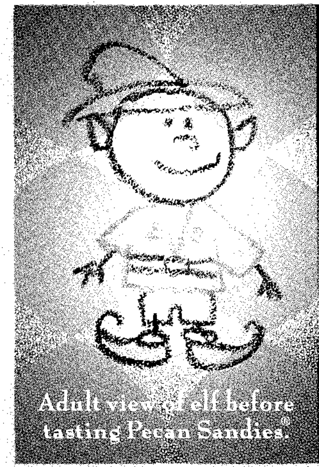
LadyGourd Sangoma—A performance of contemporary songs and dances that borrow from African traditions. (American Museum of Natural History, Main Auditorium, Central Park W. at 79th St. Feb. 28 at 7:30. Free with museum admission.)

Readings—Feb. 26 at 8: Gail Galloway Adams, Terry Galloway, and Carole L. Glickfeld reading from their own works. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. For information about tickets, call 645-5848.) . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 8:15: Richard Howard and Molly Peacock reading from their own poetry. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.) . . . ¶ Feb. 28 at 6:30: Anne Meara, Keith Szarabajka, Robert Earl Jones, and Jerry Zaks reading from works by Grace Paley, Bill Franzen, G. K. Wuori, and Frederick Busch. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.)



Pecans and Perception.

How a single cookie can alter a grown-up's view of elves.


Adult view of elf before tasting Pecan Sandies.®

Adult view of elf after tasting Pecan Sandies.®

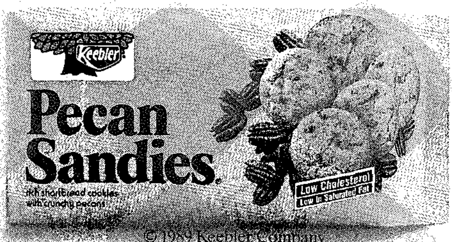
"Elves are just for kids." Many adults share this unfortunate misconception.

The notion of little elves scurrying about inside their hollow tree baking uncommonly good cookies in a magic oven does have an innocent, childlike appeal. But the appeal of their cookies reaches well beyond childhood.

Take Keebler® Pecan Sandies.® This cookie has what modern marketers refer to as an "adult profile." It looks basic by kid cookie standards. But its appearance belies a rich, sensuous, sophisticated shortbread cookie loaded with pieces of real pecans. And Pecan Sandies® are low in cholesterol. This further enhances their adult appeal.

One taste of Pecan Sandies® and elves suddenly look different to an adult. Images of frivolous forest creatures give way to memories of home and hearth. A childish cartoon becomes a caring mother figure who bakes distinctive cookies for their maturing tastes. That rich shortbread, those real pecans!

"Elves are just for kids?" Grow up.



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

"I turned down 'Stalag 17,'" Kirk Douglas once admitted, ruefully. "Holden won an Oscar." Although Douglas might have been wonderful in the role of the sardonic loner Sefton, the antihero of Billy Wilder's rambunctious 1953 P.O.W. melodrama, it would have been tough to top William Holden, who brought a matter-of-fact fierceness to the part. As Sefton, Holden drew on both the robust normality that was his hallmark ever since his starring début in the 1939 film "Golden Boy" and the cynicism he first explored as the kept screenwriter in Wilder's "Sunset Boulevard" (1950).

Sefton is a scrounger. What antagonizes his stalag-mates is his shrewdness at devising new moneymaking ventures (such as a literal rat race) and his willingness to barter with Nazi guards for no better reasons than improving his own creature comforts and packing away some loot. Holden conveys Sefton's proud, entrepreneurial individuality. He also gets across the orneriness that causes Sefton to bet on whether two potential escapees will make it out alive, as well as the street-fighting reflexes that come into play when the rest of the P.O.W.s suspect Sefton of being a traitor—of leaking barracks secrets to the Nazis. Holden had never before been so commanding and primal, and he wasn't to be so again until he starred in Sam Peckinpah's "The Wild Bunch," sixteen years later.

Based on a play by Donald Joseph Bevan and Edmund Trzcinski, "Stalag 17" (playing February 26-27 at the Cinema Village) is a claustrophobic war movie with the charge of high adventure. It doesn't even try for the richness and lyricism of a "Grand Illusion"; it's a cleverly constructed free-for-all, with moments of suspense and black comedy that influenced every English-speaking P.O.W. movie or TV show to come, from "The Great Escape" to "Hogan's Heroes." Wilder's casting was smart across the board; Otto Preminger plays the commandant. Years before, Wilder had described Preminger as "Martin Bormann in elevated shoes, with a face-lift done by a blindfolded plastic surgeon in Luxembourg." He's a perfectly hissable villain.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Enemies, A Love Story" (†).
Theatre 2: "Black Rain" (†).
Theatre 3: Films made by Merchant Ivory Productions. Feb. 19: "The Deceivers" (1988, directed by Nicholas Meyer), with Pierce Brosnan. . . . ¶ Feb. 20: "The Europeans" (1979, James Ivory), with Lee Remick, Tom Woodward, Lisa Eichhorn, and Kristin Griffith. . . . ¶ Feb. 21: "Bombay Talkie" (1970, Ivory), with Shashi Kapoor and Jennifer Kendal. . . . ¶ Feb. 22: "Savages" (1972, Ivory), with Louis J. Standlen and Anne Francine. . . . ¶ Feb. 23: "A Room with a View" (1986, Ivory), with Maggie Smith, Denholm Elliott, Helena Bonham-Carter, Julian Sands, and Daniel Day-Lewis. . . . ¶ Feb. 24: "Slaves of New York" (1989, Ivory), with Bernadette Peters and Chris Sarandon. . . . ¶ Feb. 25: "Heat and Dust" (1983, Ivory), with Julie Christie and Kapoor. . . . ¶ Feb. 26: "The Wild Party" (1975, Ivory), with Raquel Welch, James Coco, David Dukes, and Perry King. . . . ¶ Feb. 27: "The Bostonians" (1984, Ivory), with Christopher Reeve, Vanessa Redgrave, Madeleine Potter, Jessica Tandy, and Linda Hunt. . . . ¶ Feb. 28: "Roseland" (1977, Ivory), with Teresa Wright, Lou Jacobi, Geraldine Chaplin, Helen Gallagher, and Lilia Skala.
Theatre 4: "New Year's Day" (Henry Jaglom).
Theatre 5: "Torrents of Spring" (Jerzy Skolimowski), with Timothy Hutton, Nastassja Kinski, and Valeria Golino.
Theatre 6: "Drugstore Cowboy" (Gus Van Sant), with Matt Dillon, Kelly Lynch, James Le Gros, and Heather Graham.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Feb. 20: "Dishonored" (1931, Joseph von Sternberg), with Marlene Dietrich and Victor McLaglen.
Feb. 21-22: "Shanghai Express" (1932, von Sternberg), with Dietrich, Clive Brook, Warner Oland, and Anna May Wong.
Feb. 23-24: "Blonde Venus" (1932, von Sternberg), with Dietrich, Herbert Marshall, Cary Grant, and Dickie Moore.
Feb. 25 and 27: "The Scarlet Empress" (1934, von Sternberg), with Dietrich, Sam Jaffe, and John Lodge.
From Feb. 28: "The Devil Is a Woman" (1935, von Sternberg), with Dietrich, Lionel Atwill, and Cesar Romero.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Roger & Me" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 22: "Steel Magnolias" (†). From Feb. 23: "Men Don't Leave" (Paul Brickman), with Jessica Lange.
Theatre 3: "Glory" (†).

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
"Born on the Fourth of July" (†).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Internal Affairs" (†).
Theatre 2: "Roger & Me" (†).
Theatre 3: "Music Box" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 22: "Madhouse" (Tom Ropelewski), with John Larroquette and Kirstie Alley. From Feb. 23: "Where the Heart Is" (John Boorman), with Dabney Coleman.
Theatre 5: "Glory" (†).
Theatre 6: "Stanley & Iris" (Martin Ritt), with Jane Fonda and Robert De Niro.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Stella" (John Erman), with Bette Midler.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Internal Affairs" (†).
Theatre 2: "Madhouse" (Tom Ropelewski), with John Larroquette and Kirstie Alley.
Theatre 3: "Stanley & Iris" (Martin Ritt), with Jane Fonda and Robert De Niro.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through Feb. 22: "Loose Cannons" (Bob Clark), with Gene Hackman and Dan Aykroyd.
From Feb. 23: To be announced.

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"Men Don't Leave" (Paul Brickman), with Jessica Lange.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Enemies, A Love Story" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
Through Feb. 22: "Music Box" (†).
From Feb. 23: "Rosalie Goes Shopping" (Percy Adlon), with Marianne Sägebrecht, Brad Davis, and Judge Reinhold.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 2: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Courage Mountain" (Christopher Leitch), with Juliette Caton and Charlie Sheen.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).
Theatre 2: "The War of the Roses" (Danny DeVito), with Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and DeVito.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Stella" (John Erman), with Bette Midler and John Goodman.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 22: "Roger & Me" (†). From Feb. 23: "Where the Heart Is" (John Boorman), with Dabney Coleman.
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "The Little Mermaid" (†): and (evenings only) "sex, lies, and videotape" (Steven Soderbergh), with James Spader, Peter Gallagher, Andie MacDowell, and Laura San Giacomo.

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Steel Magnolias" (†).
Theatre 2: "Glory" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Madhouse" (Tom Ropelewski), with John Larroquette and Kirstie Alley.
Theatre 2: "Internal Affairs" (†).

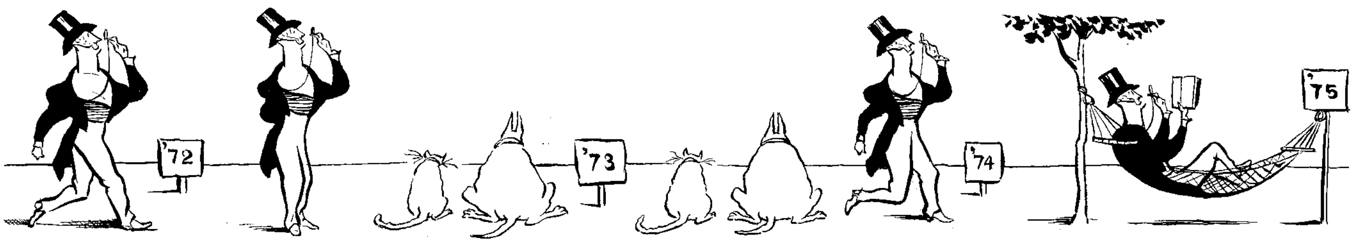
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Stanley & Iris" (Martin Ritt), with Jane Fonda and Robert De Niro.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Born on the Fourth of July" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "The War of the Roses" (Danny DeVito), with Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and DeVito.
Theatre 2: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.



Theatre 2: "Stella" (John Erman), with Bette Midler and John Goodman.

WEST SIDE

Bleecker Street Cinema 1 and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: "Labyrinth of Passion" (1982, directed by Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "The War of the Roses" (Danny DeVito), with Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and DeVito.
Theatre 2: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).
Theatre 2: "Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "The Little Mermaid" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 22: "sex, lies, and videotape" (Steven Soderbergh), with James Spader, Peter Gallagher, Andie MacDowell, and Laura San Giacomo. From Feb. 23: "Where the Heart Is" (John Boorman), with Dabney Coleman.
Theatre 3: "Henry V" (†).
Theatre 4: "Speaking Parts" (Atom Egoyan).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).
Theatre 2: "Loose Cannons" (Bob Clark), with Gene Hackman and Dan Aykroyd.
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 22: "Steel Magnolias" (†). From Feb. 23: "Rosalie Goes Shopping" (Percy Adlon), with Marianne Sägebrecht, Brad Davis, and Judge Reinhold.
Theatre 4: "The War of the Roses" (Danny DeVito), with Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and DeVito.
Theatre 5: "Enemies, A Love Story" (†).
Theatre 6: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 7: "Driving Miss Daisy" (†).
Theatre 8: Through Feb. 22: "Tango and Cash" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with Sylvester Stallone and Kurt Russell. From Feb. 23: "Men Don't Leave" (Paul Brickman), with Jessica Lange.
Theatre 9: "Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.

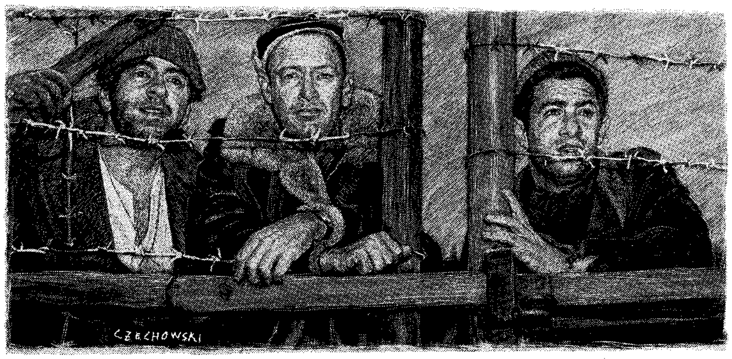
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).
Theatre 2: "Courage Mountain" (Christopher Leitch), with Juliette Caton, Charlie Sheen, Leslie Caron, and Jan Rubeš.
Theatre 3: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Drugstore Cowboy" (Gus Van Sant), with Matt Dillon, Kelly Lynch, James Remar, James Le Gros, and Heather Graham.
Theatre 2: "Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.
Theatre 3: "Field of Dreams" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).
Theatre 5: "Courage Mountain" (Christopher Leitch), with Juliette Caton, Charlie Sheen, Leslie Caron, and Jan Rubeš.
Theatre 6: "True Love" (Nancy Savoca), with Annabella Sciorra and Ron Eldard.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through Feb. 22: "Stella" (John Erman), with Bette Midler and John Goodman.
From Feb. 23: "Where the Heart Is" (John Boorman), with Dabney Coleman.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
Through Feb. 22: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).
From Feb. 23: "Mountains of the Moon" (Bob Rafelson), with Patrick Bergin.

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Henry V" (†).



Robert Strauss, William Holden, and Don Taylor in "Stalag 17"

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Roger & Me" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Enemies, A Love Story" (†).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
Through Feb. 22: "Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).
From Feb. 23: "Lonely Woman Seeks Life Companion" (Viacheslav Krishtofovich; in Russian), with Irina Kupchenko.

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Camille Claudel" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Stanley and Iris" (Martin Ritt), with Jane Fonda and Robert De Niro.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "My Left Foot" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sweetie" (Jane Campion).
Theatre 3: "The Plot Against Harry" (Michael Roemer).

Cinema Studio 1 and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "Mystery Train" (Jim Jarmusch).
Theatre 2: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Time of the Gypsies" (Emir Kusturica; in Romany).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Stella" (John Erman), with Bette Midler and John Goodman.
Theatre 2: "Madhouse" (Tom Ropelewski), with John Larroquette and Kirstie Alley.
Theatre 3: "Driving Miss Daisy" (†).
Theatre 4: "Internal Affairs" (†).
Theatre 5: "Glory" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Feb. 22: "Flashback" (Franco Amurri), with Dennis Hopper and Kiefer Sutherland. From Feb. 23: "Where the Heart Is" (John Boorman), with Dabney Coleman.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).
Theatre 2: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 2: "Loose Cannons" (Bob Clark), with Gene Hackman and Dan Aykroyd.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Glory" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 22: "The War of the Roses" (directed by Danny DeVito), with Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and DeVito. From Feb. 23: "The Blood of Heroes" (David Peoples), with Rutger Hauer.
Theatre 3: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg.
Theatre 4: "The White Girl" (James Cannady).
Theatre 5: "Tango and Cash" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with Sylvester Stallone and Kurt Russell.
Theatre 6: "Loose Cannons" (Bob Clark), with Gene Hackman and Dan Aykroyd.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Madhouse" (Tom Ropelewski), with John Larroquette and Kirstie Alley.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: "The Little Mermaid" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 22: "Flashback" (Franco Amurri), with Dennis Hopper and Kiefer Sutherland. From Feb. 23: "Stella" (John Erman), with Bette Midler.
Theatre 4: "Internal Affairs" (†).

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Heart Condition" (James D. Parriott), with Bob Hoskins and Denzel Washington.

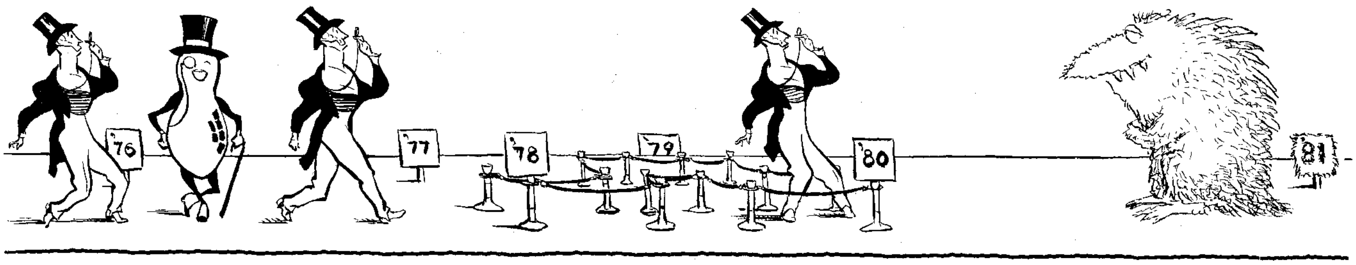
National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 22: "Tremors" (Ron Underwood), with Kevin Bacon and Fred Ward. From Feb. 23: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).
Theatre 2: "Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner.

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
"Back to the Future Part II" (Robert Zemeckis), with Michael J. Fox, Christopher Lloyd, Lea Thompson, and Thomas F. Wilson.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 2: "Hard to Kill." (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Feb. 19: "Mutiny on the Bounty" (1962, directed by Lewis Milestone), with Marlon Brando.
Feb. 20-21: "The Nightcomers" (1972, Michael Winner), with Marlon Brando and Stephanie Beacham; and "Burn!" (1970, Gillo Pontevorco), with Brando.
Feb. 22: "A Dry White Season" (1989, Euzhan Palcy), with Donald Sutherland, Janet Suzman, Jurgen Prochnow, Zakes Mokae, Susan Sarandon, and Marlon Brando; and "The Formula" (1980, John G. Avildsen), with George C. Scott, Brando, and Marthe Keller.
Feb. 23-24: "Guys and Dolls" (1955, Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Marlon Brando, Jean Simmons, Frank Sinatra, and Vivian Blaine.
Feb. 25-26: "Barocco" (1978, André Téchiné; in French), with Isabelle Adjani, Gérard Depardieu, and Marie-France Pisier; and



AIG Issues Forum

Why reforming our liat
America is to succee

EXCESSIVE LIABILITY AWARDS MAKE IT TOUGH FOR U.S. COMPANIES TO COMPETE.

We are a compassionate society. We want to compensate those who have suffered.

But when our courts expand traditional concepts of liability, causing defendants to pay excessive compensation, we're adding to the costs we all pay for goods and services. We're encouraging companies to stop research and development on new products. And we're even making it harder for U.S. companies to compete overseas.

PAYING A HIDDEN TAX.

In reality, the American system of liability has become the source of a hidden tax on our economy—a tax that can account for as much as 50% of the price paid for a product.

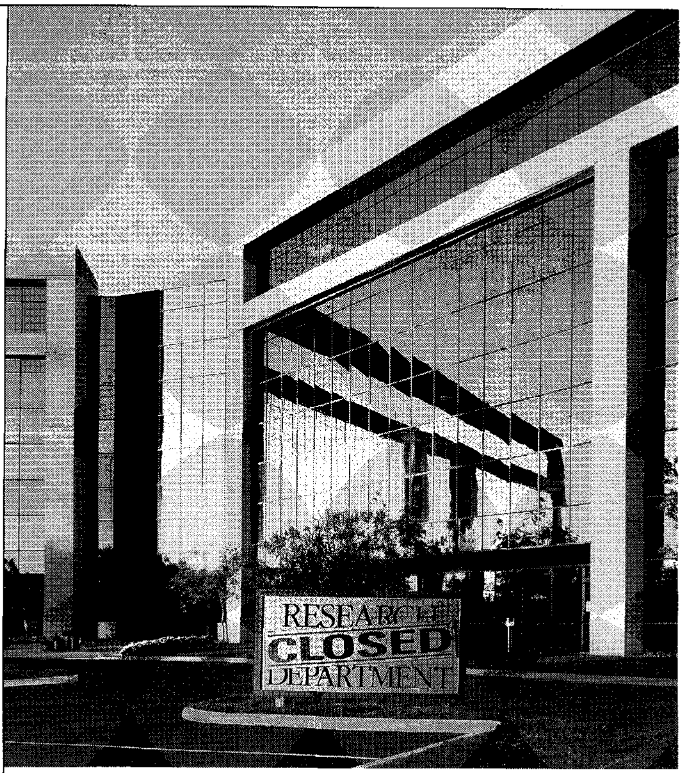
What's worse, it has been estimated that this hidden tax amounts to $80 billion a year—a sum equal to the combined profits of the nation's 200 largest corporations.

Our economic competitors' legal systems do not encourage litigation to the extent we do. Consider, for example, that there are 30 times more lawsuits per capita in the U.S. than in Japan.

Is it any wonder that America is having a tough time competing in overseas markets?

UNCERTAINTY STIFLES ENTERPRISE.

The unpredictability of our liability system is also enormously costly to American competitiveness. For example, in a recent survey of CEO's, the Conference Board found that worry about potential liability lawsuits caused 47% of firms surveyed to discontinue one or more product lines. In addition, 25% stopped certain product research and development, and 39% decided against introducing a new product. Meanwhile, our overseas competitors continue to research and develop new products at an ever-increasing pace.



ARE WE CONTROLLING RISKS OR INCREASING THEM?

When we give a drunk driver the right to sue an automaker or highway engineer for a million dollars after a crash, are we controlling risk?

Or just encouraging risky and careless behavior?

If you are a manufacturer, you can be sued even if your product has state-of-the-art safety features. Even if your customer misused it against your instructions. Even if the risks of misuse were obvious.

When fear of lawsuits causes physicians to limit services to patients—or worse, abandon their prac-

ty system is essential if n overseas markets.

tice altogether—lack of adequate medical treatment means greater risks for everyone.

Is this controlling risk or increasing it?

It's an unhealthy and dangerous situation that needs correcting.

WE MUST REFORM OUR "DEEP POCKETS" APPROACH TO LIABILITY.

Specifically, we need to change our approach and base liability suits on fault.

Our current system often encourages the frivolous suing of those with the ability to pay—in other words, those with "deep pockets." But does it make sense to hold such parties entirely liable, even if they were only minimally at fault?

A MORE RATIONAL APPROACH.

Those who suffer economic losses because of another party's negligence should be fairly reimbursed. No one could argue with this principle. There should also be just compensation for pain and suffering resulting from real and severe injuries.

But can we afford to continue a system that encourages litigation and financial judgements bearing little direct relationship to fault or to the actual cost of injuries suffered?

Clearly, a better approach is needed.

CONGRESS HAS A ROLE.

Legislation providing a uniform product liability standard would allow American companies to compete without the burdens of excessive liability risks. And this would unclog the courts and put American business in a stronger position as barriers to international trade and investment fall.

There is proposed legislation before Congress dealing with these issues. A solution to the liability crisis is vital to American competitiveness, and Congress can play a role in restoring the right balance.

SO DO THE COURTS.

When all is said and done, our courts are the interpreters of our laws and our values. It's our values as a society that count, especially as reflected in the courts and individual jury decisions.

Together our legislative and judicial branches must recognize the damage being done to American competitiveness from the current liability system. And help America restore the proper balance.

WHY IS AIG RUNNING ADS LIKE THIS?

AIG (American International Group) is the largest underwriter of commercial and industrial insurance in America, and the leading U.S.-based international insurance organization.

Since we deal every day with issues affecting the future of the world economy, it's understandable that we champion reform designed to strengthen American business's competitive stance in global markets.

Perhaps you'll want to keep the ball rolling by contacting your elected officials—judges and legislators—with your own views.

Or if you prefer, write M.R. Greenberg, Chairman, AIG, 70 Pine Street, New York, NY 10270.

AIG World leaders in insurance and financial services.

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

"Vincent, François, Paul, and the Others" (†).

Feb. 27-28: "Choice of Arms" (1981, Alain Corneau; in French), with Yves Montand, Gérard Depardieu, and Catherine Deneuve; and "One Woman or Two" (1987, Daniel Vigne; in English and French), with Depardieu, Sigourney Weaver, and Ruth Westheimer.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through Feb. 20: Part 2 of "Little Dorrit" (1988, Christine Edzard), with Derek Jacobi and Alec Guinness.

Feb. 21-22: "Bagdad Café" (1988, Percy Adlon), with Marianne Sägebrecht. CCH Pounder, Monica Calhoun, and Darron Flagg; and "Powwow Highway" (1989, Jonathan Wacks), with A Martinez.

Feb. 23-24: "Blue Velvet" (1986, David Lynch), with Kyle MacLachlan, Isabella Rossellini, Dennis Hopper, and Laura Dern; and "Heathers" (1989, Michael Lehmann), with Winona Ryder and Christian Slater.

Feb. 25: "An Unremarkable Life" (1989, Amin Q. Chaudhri), with Patricia Neal and Shelley Winters; and "The Whales of August" (1987, Lindsay Anderson), with Bette Davis and Lillian Gish.

Feb. 26-27: "Witness for the Prosecution" (1958, Billy Wilder), with Tyrone Power, Marlene Dietrich, Charles Laughton, Elsa Lanchester, and Una O'Connor; and "Stalag 17" (1953, Wilder), with William Holden, Don Taylor, Otto Preminger, and Robert Strauss.

From Feb. 28: "Now, Voyager" (1942, Irving Rapper), with Bette Davis, Paul Henreid, Claude Raines, and John Loder; and "The Letter" (1940, William Wyler), with Davis, Herbert Marshall, James Stephenson, Frieda Inescort, and Gale Sondergaard.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)

Through Feb. 20: "Last Tango in Paris" (1972, Bernardo Bertolucci; in French and English), with Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider; and "Tragedy of a Ridiculous Man" (1981, Bertolucci; in Italian), with Ugo Tognazzi and Anouk Aimée.

Feb. 21-22: "Gun Crazy" (1949, Joseph H. Lewis), with Peggy Cummins and John Dall; and "The Phenix City Story" (1955, Phil Karlson), with John McIntire, Richard Kiley, and Kathryn Grant.

Feb. 23-24: "Barry Lyndon" (1975, Stanley Kubrick), with Ryan O'Neal and Marisa Berenson.

Feb. 25: "Carmen" (1983, Carlos Saura; in Spanish), with Antonio Gades; and "Bizet's Carmen" (†).

Feb. 26-27: "White Heat" (1949, Raoul Walsh), with James Cagney, Virginia Mayo, Edmond O'Brien, and Margaret Wycherly; and "Come Fill the Cup" (1951, Gordon Douglas), with Cagney, Phyllis Thaxter, and Raymond Massey.

From Feb. 28: "The Conformist" (1970, Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian), with Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli, and Dominique Sanda; and "Mafioso" (1964, Alberto Lattuada; in Italian), with Alberto Sordi.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Feb. 19: "Persona" (1967, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullmann; and "The Seventh Seal" (1956, Bergman; in Swedish), with Max von Sydow, Gunnar Björnstrand, Andersson, and Nils Poppe.

Feb. 20: "Pretty Poison" (1968, Noel Black), with Anthony Perkins and Tuesday Weld; and "Point Blank" (1967, John Boorman), with Lee Marvin, Angie Dickinson, Carroll O'Connor, and Keenan Wynn.

Feb. 21: "To Catch a Thief" (1955, Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant, Grace Kelly, Jessie Royce Landis, Charles Vanel, and Brigitte Auber; and "Wait Until Dark" (1967, Terence Young), with Audrey Hepburn, Alan Arkin, and Richard Crenna.

Feb. 22: "Bob le Flambeur" (1955, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French), with Isabel Corey and Roger Duchesne; and "My Life to Live" (1962, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Anna Karina.

Feb. 23-24: "Notorious" (1946, Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant, Ingrid Bergman, Claude Rains, and Louis Calhern; and "Spellbound" (1945, Hitchcock), with Bergman, Gregory Peck, Michael Chekhov, John Emery, and Leo G. Carroll.

Feb. 25: "The Little Foxes" (1941, William Wyler), with Bette Davis, Herbert Marshall, and Teresa Wright; and "Dodsworth" (†).

Feb. 26: "One Wonderful Sunday" (1947, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese); and "Horse" (1941, Kajiro Yamamoto; in Japanese).

Feb. 27: "Young and Innocent" ("The Girl Was Young"; 1937, Alfred Hitchcock), with Derrick de Marney, Nova Pilbeam, Baril Radford, Percy Marmont, and Mary Clare; and "Murder" (1930, Hitchcock), with Herbert Marshall and Norah Baring.

Feb. 28: "The Damned" (1969, Luchino Visconti), with Dirk Bogarde, Ingrid Thulin, and Helmut Berger; and "The Innocent" (1976, Visconti; in Italian), with Giancarlo Giannini.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)

THEATRE 1: Films directed by Théo Angelopoulos, all in Greek. Feb. 19 at 3: "O Megalexandros" (1980). . . . Feb. 20 at 2:30: "The Hunters" (1977). . . . Feb. 20 at 6: "Voyage to Cythera" (1984). . . . Feb. 22 at 2:30: "Days of '36" (1972). . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 6: "Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice" (1989, William Greaves), a documentary. . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 2:30, Feb. 24 at 3:30, and Feb. 25 at 2: A program of the Academy Award-nominated films for documentary short subject. . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 6, Feb. 24 at 1, and Feb. 25 at 5: A program of the Academy Award-nominated films for animated short subject and live-action short subject. . . . ¶ Feb. 26-27 at 2:30 and 6: Four different programs of Academy Award-nominated films for documentary, feature length.

THEATRE 2: Films from Colombia, most in Spanish. Feb. 19 at 2:30: "Myriam's Look" (1966, Clara Riascos) and "Law of the Jungle" (1989, Patricia Castaño and Adelaida Trujillo). . . . Feb. 19 at 5: "Night People" (1984, Victor Gaviria), "Uproar in the Uptown Neighborhood" (1987, Alberto Vides and Luis González), "That Day" (1985, Carlos Mayolo), and "Dead Men's River" (1966, Tulio Luzardo). . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 3: "Picture Snatcher" (1933, Lloyd Bacon), with James Cagney, Ralph Bellamy, and Alice White. . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 6: "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt" (1956, Fritz Lang), with Dana Andrews and Joan Fontaine. . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 3: "Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice" (1989, William Greaves), a documentary. . . . ¶ Films directed by Théo Angelopoulos, all in Greek. Feb. 23 at 6: "The Beekeeper" (1986). . . . Feb. 24 at 2: "Voyage to Cythera" (1984). . . . Feb. 24 at 5: "Landscape in the Mist" (1988). . . . Feb. 25 at 2:30: "O Megalexandros" (1980). . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 3: "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt." . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 6: "Picture Snatcher."

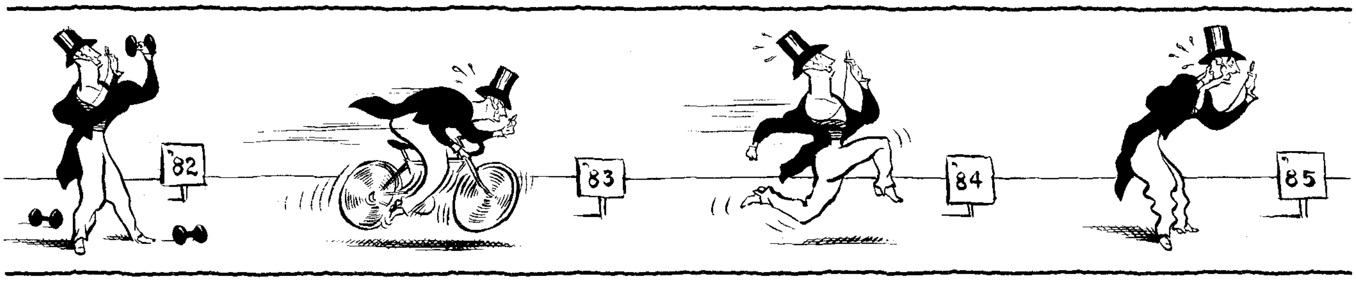
Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," a chance to see the television dramas you may have missed in the past thirty or so years. Feb. 20-24: Ambrose Bierce's "Parker Adderson, Philosopher" (1977, Arthur Brown; PBS), with Harris Yulin and Douglass Watson; and Stephen Crane's "The Blue Hotel" (1977, Jan Kadar; PBS), with David Warner and James Keach. . . . From Feb. 27: Katherine Anne Porter's "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" (1980, Randa Haines; PBS), with Geraldine Fitzgerald and Lois Smith. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 3. . . . ¶ "Twenty Years of Monty Python." Feb. 20-24: Highlights from "Rutland Weekend Television" (1975), written by, and starring, Eric Idle. . . . From Feb. 27: An episode from "The Complete and Utter History of Britain" (1969, London Weekend Television), written by, and starring, Michael Palin and Terry Jones. Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15. . . . ¶ "Laurence Olivier: The Television Legacy." Feb. 20-24: "The Moon and Sixpence" (1959, Robert Mulligan; NBC), with Olivier. . . . From Feb. 27: "The Power and the Glory" (1961, Marc Daniels), with Olivier. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6, Wednesdays through Fridays at 3, and Saturdays at 1.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—In the Riklis Theatre. Films directed by John Ford. Feb. 21 at 2:30: "Mogambo" (1953), with Clark Gable, Ava Gardner, and Grace Kelly. . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 2:30: "The Wings of Eagles" (1957), with John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara, Dan Dailey, and Ward Bond. . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 2:30: "Gideon of Scotland Yard" (1958), with Jack Hawkins, Dianne Foster, Anna Massey, and Cyril Cusack. . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 1: "The Sun Shines Bright" (1952), with Charles Winninger, Arleen Whelan, John Russell, and Stepin Fetchit. . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 4: "Sergeant Rutledge" (1960), with Jeffrey Hunter, Constance Towers, Woody Strode, and Billie Burke. . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 1: "Young Mr. Lincoln" (1939), with Henry Fonda, Alice Brady, Marjorie Weaver, and Arleen Weaver. . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 4: "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance" (1962), with James Stewart, Wayne, Vera Miles, and Lee Marvin.

Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Films showing in either the Jonas Mekas Theatre or the Maya Deren Theatre. Feb. 21 at 7: "Banana Skin Waltz" (1986, Peter Basco; in Hungarian). . . . ¶ Feb. 21-25 at 9: "Damnation" (1988, Béla Tarr; in Hungarian). . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 7: "Cry and Cry Again" (1988, Zsolt Kézdi-Kovács; in Hungarian). . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 7: Four short films by George Kuchar. . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 9: Three short films by Kuchar. . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 7: "Never Nowhere to No One" (1988, Ferenc Téglásy; in Hungarian). . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 7: "5 O'Clock Worlds" (1989, Lewis Klahr). Mr. Klahr will be present. . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 5: "The Dogs" (1989, Burt Barr), "Volatile Memory" (1988, Gretchen Bender and Sandra Tait), and "Gang of Souls" (1989, Maria Beatty). . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 7: "Farewell to You" (1987, Sándor Simó; in Hungarian). . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 7: Three short films by Ken Kobland. . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 9: "The Machine That Killed Bad People" (1989, Steve Fagin). Mr. Fagin will be present. . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 7: "Tolerance" (1986, Pál Erdóss). . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 7: "The Dogs," "Volatile Memory," and "Gang of Souls." . . . ¶ Feb. 28 at 7 and 9: "To Protect Mother Earth" (1989, Joel L. Freedman).

French Institute–Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. (355-6100)—Feb. 28 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Murmur of the Heart" (1971, Louis Malle; in French), with Léa Massari, Benoît Ferreux, Daniel Gélin, and Michel Lonsdale.

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—Feb. 23 at 6:30: "Where Chimneys Are Seen" (1953, Heinosuke Gosho; in Japanese) and "Dispersing Clouds" (1951, Gosho; in Japanese).



IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS. IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

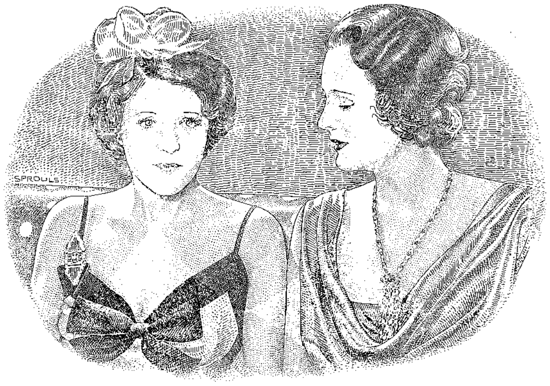
(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

Bizet's Carmen (1984)—Directed by Francesco Rosi, this version has a clean, raw vivacity and is supremely romantic. Julia Migenes-Johnson's Carmen revitalizes the story. Her strutting, her dark, messy, frizzy hair—her sexual availability—attract the middle-class clod Don José (Plácido Domingo) and drive him crazy. Rosi lets the music carry the passion; what he supplies is ideal conditions for the viewer to experience the opera as a totality. Rosi's handling suggests the most fluently stylized movie musicals. With Faith Esham as Micaëla and Ruggero Raimondi as Escamillo. In French.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; Feb. 25.)

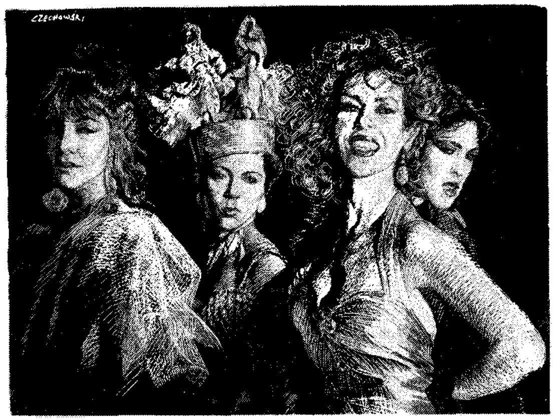
Black Rain—Directed by Shohei Imamura. In Japanese. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Angelika Film Center.)

Born on the Fourth of July—An antiwar epic, it's like one of those commemorative issues of *Life*. This one covers 1956 to 1976, and the counterculture is presented in a nostalgic, aesthetically reactionary way: it's made part of our certified public memories. The director, Oliver Stone, plays bumper cars with the camera and uses cutting to jam you into the action, and you can't even enjoy his uncouthness, because it's put at the service of sanctimony. The pure of heart, Catholic and patriotic hero Ron Kovic (Tom Cruise) thinks war is how he'll prove himself a man. He joins the Marine Corps and is sent to Vietnam; in 1968, his spine is severed, and he's left in a wheelchair, impotent, paralyzed from the chest down. The movie is a scream of rage at how he was betrayed, mutilated, neglected; it's also an uplifting account of how he boozed, quarrelled with everyone, and despaired until he stopped being contemptuous of the war protesters and became active in Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Overblown right from the start, this story is constructed as a series of blackout episodes that suggest the Stations of the Cross; rising strings alert you to the heavy stuff. Then the finale—Resurrection—takes Ron into white light, and John Williams lays on the trumpets. The script, by Stone and Kovic, is based on Kovic's autobiography. With Willem Dafoe, Tom Berenger, Raymond J. Barry as the gentle father, Caroline Kava as the castrating Mom, Kyra Sedgwick as Donna, and Abbie Hoffman.—P.K. (Reviewed in our issue of 1/22/90.) (Bijou Cinema, Baronet, U. A. East, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Metro Cinema. . . . ¶ Ziegfeld; through Feb. 22. . . . ¶ National Twin; starting Feb. 23.)

Camille Claudel—She lived, she loved, she sculpted, she went nuts. Bruno Nuytten's first film is a de-luxe biography of a nearly forgotten (but attractive!) artist who studied with the great Rodin, became his assistant and lover, and then struggled to break free of his influence and discover her own identity as a sculptor. Willful (and comely) as she is, Camille never manages to shake her obsession with Rodin, and she makes a mess of her life and her career. This is rich material, but the movie is a real chore to sit through: it's two and a half hours long, and the pace is sluggish. Nuytten, a superb cinematographer ("French Provincial," "Barocco"), doesn't seem to know how to tell a story—not one as complex as this, anyway. Isabelle Adjani plays Camille (there are obvious similarities to her role in "The Story of Adèle H.") with terrific abandon and intensity, yet the performance isn't satisfying; the film is so poorly shaped as drama that even her most striking moments seem to come out of nowhere. Also with Gérard Depardieu as Rodin, Laurent Grevill as Paul Claudel (Camille's younger brother, who became a well-known writer), and Alain Cuny. The script, by Nuytten and Marilyn Goldin, is based on a biography by Reine-Marie Paris. In French.—T.R. (Paris.)



Ruth Chatterton and Mary Astor in "Dodsworth"



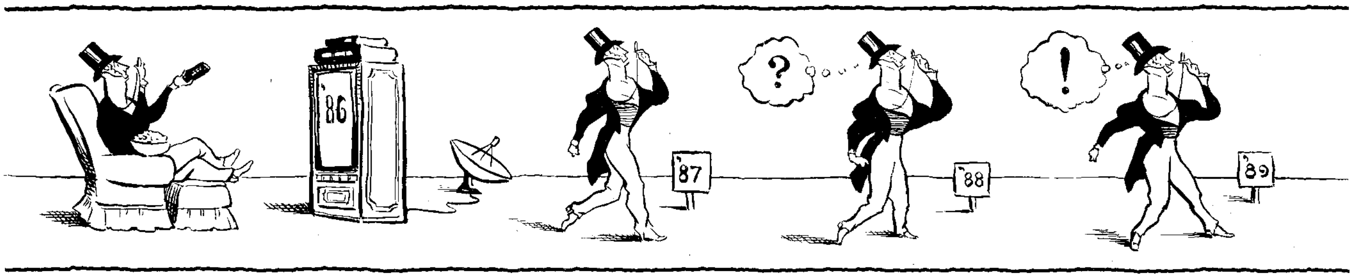
At the Bleecker Street, "Labyrinth of Passion"

Crimes and Misdemeanors—Written and directed by Woody Allen, it's a sad, censuring look at an eminent ophthalmologist (Martin Landau) and other crooks in high places who (in Allen's view) have convinced themselves that they can do anything, because they don't think God is watching. Allen is making the film equivalent of a play of ideas, and the ideas have no excitement. He's telling us not just what we already know but what we've already rejected. Woody Allen himself plays a little, grubbing-for-a-living documentary filmmaker who falls in love but can't compete for the woman (Mia Farrow) against a darling of the media, a tall, egomaniacal TV producer played with a wonderfully smug, screwy abandon by Alan Alda. Except for Alda, and Landau (when he's showing nervous impatience), and Jerry Orbach, who plays the ophthalmologist's shady brother, most of the large cast is proficient yet brittle and dull. With Sam Waterston (as a rabbi who's going blind), Anjelica Huston, Claire Bloom, Joanna Gleason, Caroline Aaron, Nora Ephron in a bit, and Daryl Hannah—uncredited, but looking so luscious she almost stops the show. The bland cinematography is by Sven Nykvist.—P.K. (10/30/89) (Bleecker Street Cinema, and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . ¶ Carnegie Screening Room; through Feb. 22.)

Dodsworth (1936)—While other writers were turning out novels ridiculing American materialism and glorifying the expatriate existence, Sinclair Lewis conceived a businessman hero and showed him to be a true dreamer, while his culture-mad wife, longing to be enriched by life in Europe, was a foolish horror. Sidney Howard made a play of Lewis's novel, and Walter Huston gave a legendary performance as the hero. He also stars in the movie version, which was produced by Sam Goldwyn with great care and taste; William Wyler is the director. There's only one trouble, really, but it's central: Sidney Howard also did the screenplay, and the movie follows the stage version too closely. It looks programmed and underpopulated, though in an elegantly stylized way. Ruth Chatterton plays the wife; Mary Astor is the woman who appreciates Dodsworth's real value.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Feb. 25.)

Driving Miss Daisy—Alfred Uhry's adaptation of his much honored play is still full of manipulative bits—it's virtually all manipulative bits—but the director, Bruce Beresford, understands how to work them while cutting down on their obviousness. Set in Atlanta, starting in 1948, the movie is the story of the companionship that develops between stubborn, suspicious Miss Daisy (Jessica Tandy), a wealthy Jewish widow of seventy-two, and her resilient chauffeur, Hoke (Morgan Freeman), a widower about a decade younger than she is. Essentially, it's about how he changes her. He's made upright, considerate, humane—he's made perfect—so that nothing will disturb our appreciation of the gentle, bittersweet reverie we're watching. But it's acted (and directed) eloquently. Tandy and Freeman achieve a beautiful equilibrium. And Dan Aykroyd comes through with a fine performance as Miss Daisy's good-old-boy son. With Esther Rolle and Patti LuPone.—P.K. (12/25/89) (68th St. Playhouse, 8th St. Playhouse, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Enemies, A Love Story—Emotionally overwhelming. Adapted from Isaac Bashevis Singer's New York City novel, set in 1949—a post-Holocaust sex farce in which three passionately jealous women are in love with a guilt-ridden, self-effacing man. The director, Paul Mazursky, has gathered a superbly balanced cast and kept the action so smooth that the viewer is carried along on a tide of mystical slyness. Ron Silver is the Polish-Jewish intellectual who survived the Final Solution by hiding in a hayloft. Margaret Sophie Stein is the Gentile peasant (now his wife) who risked her life to take care of him. Lena Olin is his diabolically willful mistress, a survivor of the camps. Anjelica Huston is the wife (with an erotic aura) he thought was killed by the Nazis. This richly satisfying movie is restrained, yet it has its own deeply crazy turmoil. Mazursky pulls the rug out from under us, and we drop through the farce. With Alan King, Judith Malina, Phil



Leeds, and Mazursky. The script is by Roger L. Simon and the director.—P.K. (12/25/89) (Angelika Film Center, Gotham Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

The Fabulous Baker Boys—Two lounge pianists (brothers, played by Beau and Jeff Bridges) add a vocalist (Michelle Pfeiffer) to their act, and she changes their lives. This romantic fantasy has a forties-movie sultriness and an eighties movie-struck melancholy. Put them together and you have a movie in which eighties glamour is being defined. The young writer-director Steve Kloves trips off your bluesy, narcissistic feelings about popular music and commercial-movie emotions; he invites you to laugh if you want to. (You feel the heat even if you're laughing.) The three stars seem perfect at what they're doing—newly minted icons. When Pfeiffer (who does her own singing) delivers "Makin' Whoopee," while crawling over a grand piano like a long-legged kitty-cat, she rivals Rita Hayworth in "Gilda."—P.K. (10/16/89) (Worldwide Cinemas.)

Field of Dreams—Doggerel emotion. Kevin Costner, a New Age farmer in Iowa, longs to be reconciled with his dead father, a minor-league baseball player whose outlook he had rejected in the sixties. He hears a whispered command to build a baseball field, and when he does the spirits of Shoeless Joe Jackson (Ray Liotta) and the other White Sox who were barred from baseball for life after the 1919 World Series scandal arrive and play regularly. This is only the beginning of the hero's mystical encounters. That the film is sincere doesn't mean it's not manipulative; when the weepers in the audience start up, you may feel like a pariah if you're not moved. Adapted by the writer-director Phil Alden Robinson from W. P. Kinsella's 1982 novel, "Shoeless Joe."—P.K. (5/1/89) (Worldwide Cinemas.)

Glory—This Civil War epic, based on fiery, spirit-stirring material that has never before been tapped for the movies, is emotionally moving even when the scenes falter. The 54th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry was the first black fighting unit to be formed in the North, and the white colonel in command of the effort to prove that black men had the discipline and valor to stand up against the enemy was Robert Gould Shaw, the twenty-five-year-old son of abolitionists. As the small, sad-faced Shaw, Matthew Broderick shows us the misery of a softhearted commanding officer who is determined to prepare his men for what's ahead. Denzel Washington (as an ornery, troublemaking runaway slave), Morgan Freeman (who brings great moral authority to his role of a gravedigger-turned-soldier), and Andre Braugher (who plays a bookish recruit) are the usual representative group of enlistees who bicker and quarrel before they shape up and become fine soldiers, but the actors perform the roles as if they've never been played before. Although the script is a conventional melodrama, the director, Edward Zwick, has made something more thoughtful than that. He doesn't have the instinct for images that would burst the written framework, but he's made a good film on a great subject. With Jihmi Kennedy, who is quietly impressive as a backcountry recruit, and Cary Elwes as a white officer. The screenplay, based partly on Shaw's letters, is by Kevin Jarre. The cinematography is by Freddie Francis, and the score, which features the Boys Choir of Harlem, is by James Horner.—P.K. (2/5/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Henry V—Adapted and directed by its young star, Kenneth Branagh, this fast-paced version isn't exultant, like the one made forty-five years earlier by Laurence Olivier. Branagh emphasizes the price paid for war: the bloodshed. And, in keeping with his generation's supposed disillusion with war, he minimizes the play's glorification of the English fighting man. His conception of how to film the play is to look closely at the conniving, the misgivings, the ego wars. (This epic noir doesn't indicate why the French lost at Agincourt.) Branagh is not an overnight great moviemaker; his attempts at spectacular effects strain his inventiveness. But as an actor he has something of James Cagney's confident Irishness; he's intensely likable, with a beautiful, expressive voice and a straightforwardness that drives the whole film ahead. He and the other performers are so up that you feel their pride in working on true dramatic poetry. It's a company of stars: Paul Scofield as the melancholy French king whose face foretells the doom of his army, Christopher Ravenscroft as the herald Mountjoy, Derek Jacobi as the Chorus, Judi Dench as Mistress Quickly, Robbie Coltrane as Falstaff, Brian Blessed as Exeter, Richard Briers as Bardolph, Richard Easton as the Constable of France, Alec McCowen as Ely, Robert Stephens as Pistol, Emma Thompson as Katherine, Geraldine McEwan as Alice, Christian Bale as Falstaff's boy, and, best of all, perhaps, Ian Holm as the chattering Welshman Fluellen.—P.K. (11/27/89) (Quad Cinema, and Festival.)

Internal Affairs—This sophisticated variant of other L.A. cops-and-coke-and-art-world thrillers is art-house sleaze, with a creepy, rhythmic quality that sucks you in and keeps you amused. It has an ingeniously nasty subtext—a dirty, sexy twist on the Iago-Othello relationship. This Iago is a prosperous veteran cop, played by Richard Gere, who's being investigated by two officers from the Police Department's internal-affairs division: a righteous, ramrod-straight Latino (Andy Garcia) with a beautiful blond wife, and his sane, honest partner (Laurie Metcalf). Gere torments the stiff-backed Othello (Garcia), boasting of his adulterous conquest of the blond wife, and manipulates him into a jealous rage. Gere slithers through the picture very dexterously, but Garcia gives a one-note, glaring-eyed performance: except for his key, violent explosions (which are terrific), he's so rigid he's barely human. As Garcia's partner, a lesbian who doesn't try to ingratiate herself with anybody, Metcalf gives a strong, contained performance. You can't recommend this movie with a straight face—it casts a slimy-naughty spell. It's bad fun. Directed by Mike Figgis, whose previous feature was the 1988 "Stormy Monday." The smart script is by Henry Bean.—P.K. (2/5/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

The Little Mermaid—Disney-style kitsch. It's technologically sophisticated, but with just about all the simpering old Disney values in place. They're just slightly updated: the Little Mermaid—a teen-age tootsie in a flirty seashell bra—is like Sleeping Beauty plus tomboy spunk. The film does have a cheerful calypso number ("Under the Sea," by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken), and the color is bright—at least, until the mermaid goes on land, when everything seems to dull out. Pat Carroll provides the voice of Ursula, the Sea Witch; Samuel E. Wright provides the voice of Sebastian.—P.K. (12/11/89) (Quad Cinema, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Cinema 3rd Avenue. Matinées only.)

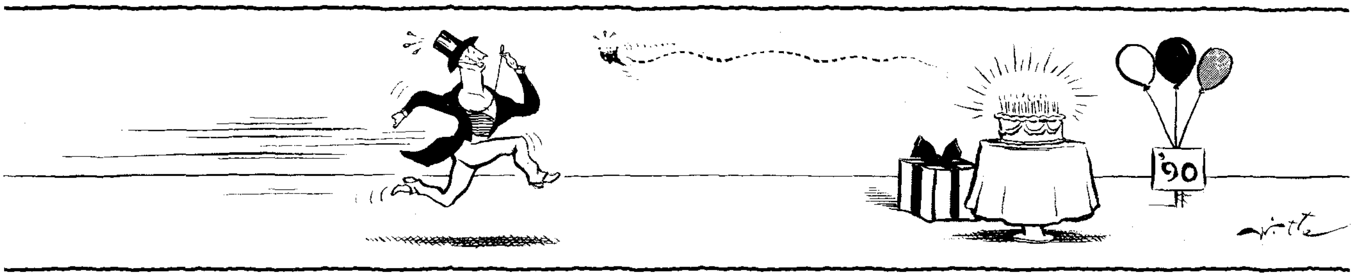
Music Box—When the cast and the script are right for Costa-Gavras—as they are here—he can give a courtroom melodrama the pull and excitement of a thriller. Jessica Lange is the Chicago lawyer defending her retired steelworker father (Armin Mueller-Stahl) against deportation to Hungary, where the Communist government is waiting to try him for war crimes. The emotional core of the movie is that during the trial, as the Second World War victims give their accounts, the daughter begins to lose faith in her father's innocence. There are no flashbacks; there's no shock apparatus. We simply take in what they're saying, and we watch her take it in. Lange verges on the astounding. Costa-Gavras provides a low-key, controlled atmosphere, and she fills it with passion. The final plot developments feel fake, but this is a remarkably lucid piece of storytelling. The script is by Joe Eszterhas.—P.K. (1/8/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6. . . . ¶ Plaza; through Feb. 22.)

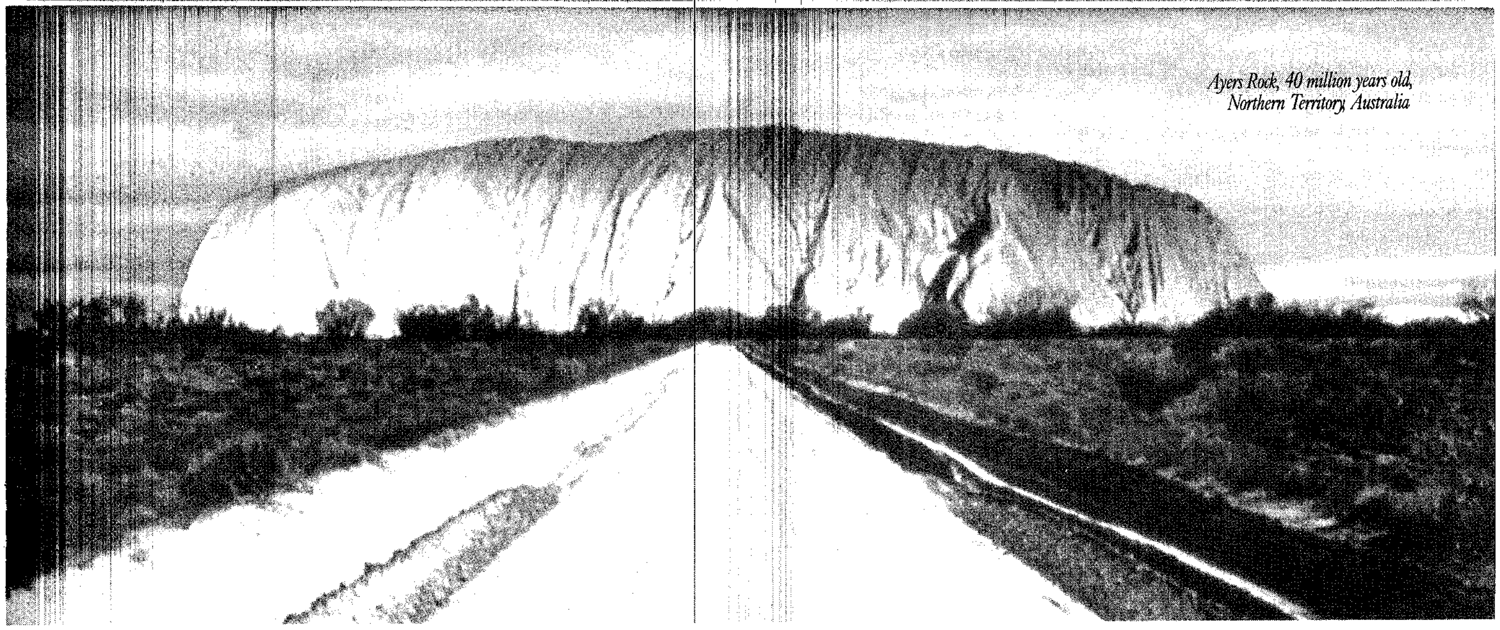
My Left Foot—The greatness of Daniel Day-Lewis's performance as the Dubliner Christy Brown, a victim of cerebral palsy who became a painter and a writer, is that he pulls you inside Christy's frustration and rage (and his bottomless thirst). There's nothing soft or maudlin about this movie's view of Christy: he's anguished and locked in, yet excitingly insolent. The movie may tear you apart, but it's the story of a triumphantly tough guy who lived it up, and Day-Lewis's interpretation has some of the sexual seductiveness that was so startling in Olivier's Richard III. This is the first film of the Irish playwright-director Jim Sheridan, who wrote the superb screenplay with another Irish playwright, Shane Connaughton. With Brenda Fricker, Ray McAnally, Ruth McCabe, and Hugh O'Conor playing Christy as a child.—P.K. (10/2/89) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Roger & Me—Michael Moore's widely praised muckraking documentary is about his two-and-a-half-year pursuit of Roger Smith, the chairman of General Motors, who, according to the film, is directly responsible for closing eleven plants and bringing about the destruction of Flint, Michigan—GM's birthplace and Moore's home town. The film purports to show what was happening in Flint from February, 1987, to August, 1989, but what happens is that Moore, a big shambling joker who's the director, producer, writer, and star, deadpans his way through interviews with an assortment of unlikely people, who are used as stooges. He chases gags and improvises his own version of history: in his account of the plant closings, the worker layoffs, and the construction of tourist attractions, he compresses the events of many years and fiddles with the time sequence. He comes on in a give-'em-hell style, but he breaks faith with the audience. And he does something that is humanly very offensive: "Roger & Me" uses its leftism as a superior attitude. Members of the audience can laugh at ordinary working people and still feel that they're taking a politically correct position.—P.K. (1/8/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, and 57th St. Playhouse. . . . ¶ Cinema II; through Feb. 22.)

Steel Magnolias—Chalk scraping across a blackboard for two hours.—P.K. (Gemini. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and Chelsea Cinemas; through Feb. 22.)

Vincent, François, Paul, and the Others (1974)—A fabulous all-star cast that includes Yves Montand, Michel Piccoli, Serge Reggiani, Gérard Depardieu, Stéphane Audran, Marie Dubois, and Antonella Lualdi, in an undeservedly neglected movie about a group of people who take refuge in friendship. All hell breaks loose in their lives, but the friendship pads their falls. The director, Claude Sautet, is a wizard at juggling and balancing the complex "Dinner at Eight" situation, and he's got the control and refinement of a master—the film may be too impersonally crafted, but it moves rhythmically, as if it were a melancholy, romantic tune. Cinematography by Jean Boffety. In French.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Feb. 25-26.)

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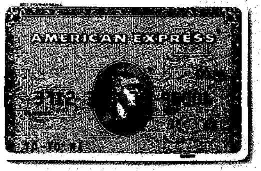

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THE NEW YORKER

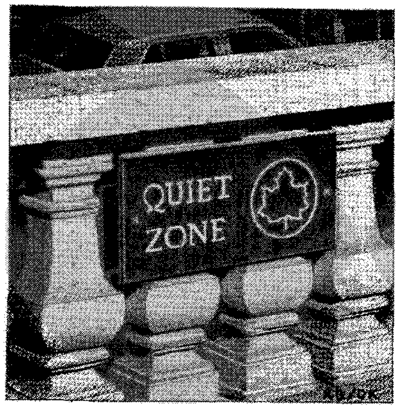
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

THE news, earlier this month, that Nelson Mandela had been released from a South African prison was about as joyous as news gets. In this season of extraordinary political drama, it felt like a grand finale. The serial implosions of tyranny in Eastern Europe and the breathtaking lurches toward democracy in the Soviet Union all seemed to reach a climax of sorts in the spectacle of Mr. Mandela's release. It was as if the same winds that freed Václav Havel and Andrei Sakharov had crossed Africa and blown open the door of Mr. Mandela's cell. Once again, an entire nation seemed to rise in exaltation. Once again, a state-controlled television system that had buried its rulers' opponents in silence and obloquy for decades was transformed, suddenly broadcasting the forbidden images, letting the long-unspeakable truths be spoken. Once again, all bets were off. By some fine alchemy of history, this white-haired, softly smiling African, obviously unbroken by twenty-seven years in prison, now seemed to hold a large chunk of his country's, if not the world's, destiny in his hands.

Of course, South Africa is not Eastern Europe. And Mr. Mandela's speech after his release—his first remarks in public since his trial in 1964—made clear some crucial differences between the struggle waged for freedom in his country and its counterparts elsewhere. He saluted the South African Communist Party, and he suggested that the country's major industries should be nationalized. He also vowed to continue the armed struggle against apartheid. In an era of peaceful revolutions, toppled and disgraced Communist parties, and the eclipse of planned economies, these were startling remarks. They raised the possibility that Mr. Mandela might be unaware of all the ways the world had changed since 1964. A more likely explanation, however, is that the historical imperatives of the South African revolution are simply unlike those of contemporary Europe. The Communist Party, for instance, has a distinguished record of opposition to racism in South Africa and a long-standing alliance with Mr. Mandela's own movement, the African National Congress. The great concentration of wealth in the hands of a few bankers and mining barons is, moreover, a major problem in a country as unevenly developed as South Africa, and has made the idea of redistribution extremely popular. At his trial, Mr. Mandela explained that while he was not a Communist he was attracted by the idea of a classless society; he also expressed the highest regard for the British Parliament. In his speech after his release, he emphasized the importance of democratic elections.

And yet, even as the countries of Eastern Europe prepare for historic elections, there are not likely to be democratic elections any time soon in South Africa. Mr. Mandela's release did not come at the height of a popular uprising or in response to irresistible pressure; it came, if anything, during a lull. It was a transcendent moment in the South African saga, yet it was by no means the story's climax. White rule is suffering a crisis of legitimacy, but that has been true for many years. The regime of President F. W. de Klerk is in no imminent danger of falling; neither is it in any rush to trade away power. In some ways, the South African revolution is an old-fashioned one. It's the sort of proletarian revolution that Marx thought would follow industrialization in the West but never actually did. It's also a revolt of a colonized people against a minority-settler state—except that in South Africa there are more than five million settlers, most of whom have no other homeland. And so, in a profound sense, the South African revolution is really something new under the sun. It is going to have to find some radically new ways to reach its goals. And no one seems to understand the distance that is yet to be travelled better than Nelson Mandela himself.



The whole world watches South Africa so raptly for very good reason. It is the country where the world's most fundamental conflict—between rich and poor, white and black, the First World and the Third—is most incisively etched. This tableau clearly makes some powerful people uncomfortable. Perhaps the most self-serving international reaction to Mr. Mandela's release was that of the British Prime Minister. Even as Mr. Mandela was calling for continued economic sanctions against South Africa, Mrs. Thatcher, never known as a campaigner for his release, was announcing, "I shall be approaching the European Community and suggesting that, since we got Mr. Mandela released, that we do consider lifting some of the sanctions." But her reaction was nothing, of course, compared with that of the white racists inside South Africa who marched in protest in Pretoria, chanting "Hang Mandela!" The marchers—with their many sympathizers inside the South African police and Army—provide one indication of the courage that Mr. de Klerk showed in releasing Mr. Mandela. Even if Mr. de Klerk's decision was a calculated move in what could turn into a protracted political endgame, it was an inspired act. It gave hope to millions of black South Africans. It also resonated throughout the rest of the world—not only for the poor and oppressed but for anyone contemplating the planet's future as the long, deadly struggle between East and West relaxes and a no less serious struggle between North and South looms.

The deepest impression of all, however, may have been made on Mr. de Klerk's own constituency. Many white South Africans seemed to be in a state of blissful shock. A white reporter on South African television, describing the scene of Mr. Mandela's release, declared, "There is total jubilation, total excitement, total joy." And there were whites who seemed to grasp the meaning of the event at its most basic level. Along the route from the prison to Cape Town they hung banners saying "Welcome Home."

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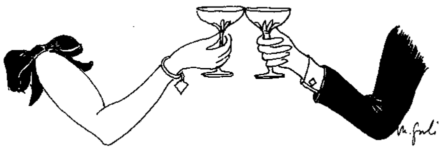
A FRIEND writes:

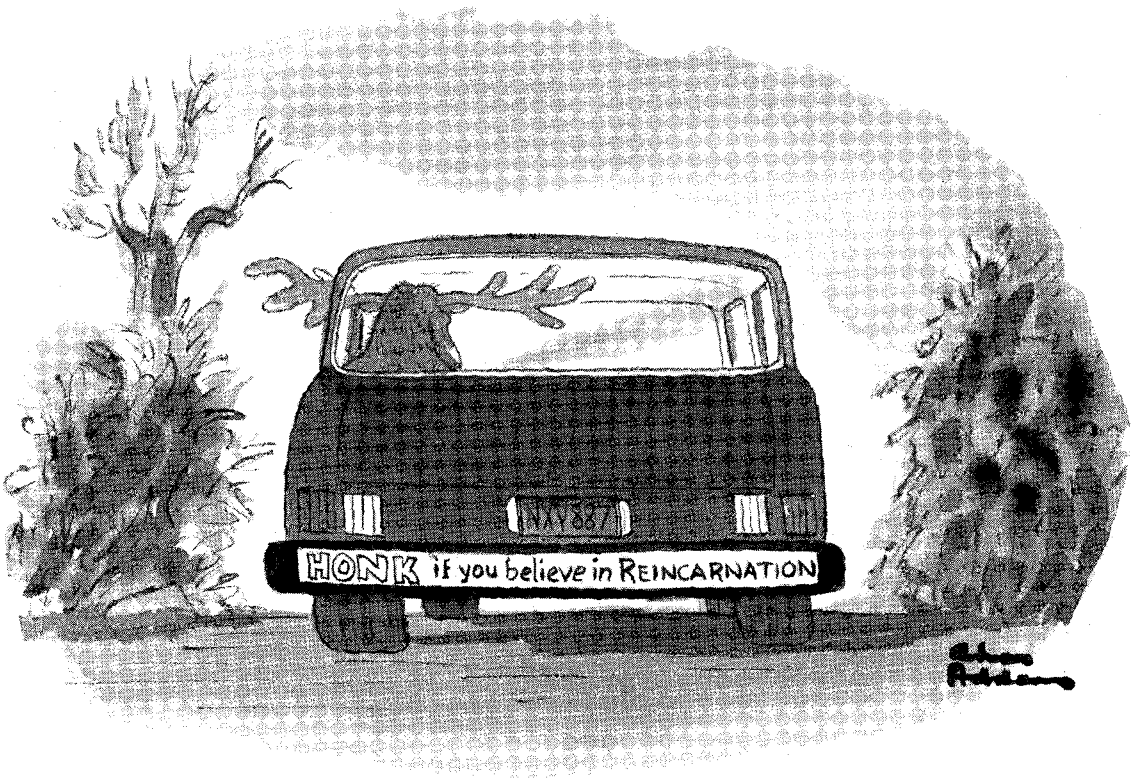
It is perhaps time for me to announce that I have never met John Gotti, although I still have some of his furniture. What I retain is a small bench, on which I keep my aquarium, and a folding chair I sometimes use for guests. Naturally, were Mr. Gotti ever to express a desire for the return of either or both of these objects, I would see that it was accomplished, but I came by these items legitimately and I feel sure he respects that. They came into my possession several years ago, while I was living in an apartment on Mulberry Street, across from the Ravenite Social Club, Mr. Gotti's Manhattan headquarters. At a certain moment, the police had better-than-average success in planting a microphone inside the club. The indictments they were able to bring about, based on what they heard, convinced the Ravenites that it would be a good idea to renovate. They tore out the windows of the club's simple storefront and bricked them over and left two *much* smaller windows—almost what you might call gunports—so that the look of the club changed from that of a benevolent neighborhood organization to that of a paramilitary one. Apparently, the Ravenites decided to remodel, too, because I picked up the chair and the bench from things that were being thrown out of the club. The bench I had never seen before. When I walked past the club in warm weather, the door was usually open, and I could see some tables, and a bar to one side, behind which was an enormous espresso machine—the kind that looks like an architectural model of a palace—and, beyond the bar, a small room in back, where there were tables at which sat a few old men who were either scrawny or overweight. It was not possible to draw a friendly, "Hi, neighbor!" greeting from any of those people, and after a while I no longer tried.

The chair I was familiar with, because I had often seen it used by the man who guarded the entrance of the Ross Trucking Company, next door to the club. A truck came to and went from the garage at the rate of about once a week. These were trucks from another moment in the history of transportation. I would say they were trucks from about thirty-six dance crazes back. They all had high cabs and rounded fenders. The trucking company shared the building with a live-poultry market, so for a while I was among the few people in Manhattan who were awakened each morning by a rooster. The man who used to sit in my chair was short and had gray hair and the kind of shape that is more comfortable sitting down than standing up supporting itself. His name was Mike, but the people who knew him (not me) called him Pickles. He would place the chair backward on the sidewalk, then straddle it as if it were a saddle. He was perhaps in his late forties. He had a partnership in some pigeons that were kept on the roof above my top-floor apartment, but he said he hadn't seen them for years—he couldn't stand the climb. He lived down the block, on the second floor, and when he wasn't working I would often see him at his window, leaning out with his arms on the sill, watching the street.



On the door of the garage was a painting of a pineapple and a bunch of bananas. Sometimes after the arrival of a truck, Mike would hand out pineapples to handsome young women whom he had got to know because they passed the garage every day. Although I often saw him inside the Social Club, I never had the feeling that his position among the members was important or secure. He was never assigned to wash the black cars of the big shots who would arrive for meetings and pull right up on the sidewalk outside the club. That was a job for younger men (who would hustle toward the cars with buckets and sponges), but he didn't appear to be many rungs above whatever level it was that they occupied. He had, I felt certain, at least been assigned to *watch* the cars on occasion. Now and then, he felt the need to emphasize the connection between him and the organization. At one of those moments, he told me, "Kind of friends I have, you need a job done, they do it; then they go to Italy for a while." He followed up this statement by looking slowly left and right, as if he were drawing a line beneath his remarks.

Maybe six or seven years ago, the garage was knocked down and replaced by a squat, drab, dreary, and thuggish-looking building containing apartments. After that, I never saw Mike again. I don't mean that I think something happened to him; I mean that sitting by the door was his job and now I don't know what he does—he disappeared from the neighborhood. I would like to think there was a settlement that allowed him to seek other circumstances. His chair is old and is made of wood, with a seat made of leather. The stain on the wood, which was once a dark brown, has turned a deep red. There are scratches all over the frame, and along most of the edges the finish is worn completely away. I got hold of it by asking permission of the bartender at the club to remove it from the dumpster. The way I have it displayed in my apartment suggests photographs in those magazines which feature chaste-looking rooms containing small objects with a history.


NXY887
HONK if you believe in REINCARNATION

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Buffed Out

THE empire of graffiti, which once spread from Pelham Bay Park, in the north, to Coney Island, in the south, and for a while during the early eighties even colonized such unpromising spots as the Sidney Janis Gallery, on Fifty-seventh Street, the pages of the *Times Magazine*, and the mind of Norman Mailer, has now collapsed into a single two-thousand-square-foot, windowless studio on Grand Street. The studio belongs to Henry Chalfant, a sculptor and a student of classical Greek, who in the heyday of graffiti, during the late seventies and early eighties (a time when the form was also referred to, variously, as "spray-can art," "subway art," "writing," "the existential cry of the underclass," and "vandalism"), spent most of his time going around the city documenting graffiti with composite panoramic photographs. In the mid-eighties, the Metropolitan Transit Authority, feeling that graffiti, whatever it might be doing for the sensibilities of European intellectuals, was depressing people who rode the subways, raised the war against it from the Our Gang vs. the Truant Officer level to a level almost of iconoclasm. By last May, when the city celebrated the removal of the final graffiti-ridden subway car from service, this little bit of New York City history had been, as the writers themselves put it, buffed out.

With the subways restored to beauty, the few surviving graffiti writers can now be found most afternoons hanging out at Henry Chalfant's studio, where they draw, exchange information, and receive the occasional visitor—usually a collector from Europe or a graduate student. On a recent afternoon, the group hanging out on Grand Street included some legendary writers: A-One, whose whole cars, painted from top to bottom in a wildly improvisational style, made him the de Kooning of the No. 6 line; Crash and Daze, two pugnacious younger writers who are famous for a form of edgy, crisp "wild style" lettering that is sometimes also called "computer style"; Dondi, who pioneered a cartoon style based on figures from the Vaughn Bodie comic strip; and Lee, perhaps the most respected of all graffiti writers, who in the late seventies led the group known as the Fabulous Five. All these writers have for the last six years or so been trying to establish careers as gallery and museum artists, and they have had varying degrees of success. (The market for graffiti art in Europe remains extremely strong, but whether the European embrace of graffiti will turn out to be as long-lasting as the European embrace of jazz or the European embrace of Jerry Lewis remains to be seen.) The tone of the conversation on an average afternoon at Henry's place ranges from the Bohemian Dissolute ("Man, if you're going to drink before noon, at least find yourself an appetizer") to the Soho Canny ("It's not what that home boy said to me that worries me. It's what he's saying to Sotheby's"). On a recent afternoon, the talk turned reminiscent (it does not often), and here are some of the things that were said:

A-One (*he is small, black, and intense, and he holds his body in the shape of a question mark*): I worked for a year by myself before I ever painted on the trains. I would go up to the top floor of this project I lived in and figure out what I was going to do. I got my color coördination right, I got my drawing right, I got my name right. Now, a common error that you'll want to avoid is this: A-One does not mean "the best." It means a show of great quality. Look it up in Webster. I was not saying, "I am A-One, you are not." I was just saying, "Here is a show of great quality; the writer who made it, his name is A-One." I meant no disrespect to my fellow-artists. One thing you might want to point out is that I'm the artist who invented the difference between *drawing* a letter and *designing* a letter. Now, most of my fellow-artists worked from their original outlines. I'm not going to overhype it, and tell you I never did it that way—I knew my outlines, too—but mostly I didn't. I discovered that I could write—first with a pen, later with a spray can—without having to plan first. My eye, my mind, my hand all worked together when I was painting an A-One whole car. You might put it poetically: my optic nerve was looking at my mind, not at my *hand*, so that your optic nerve could be looking at my art, not at my *plan*.

Lee (*he is in his late twenties—a slight, diffident, and immensely thoughtful man*): When I was young, I thought my name would run forever. Writing was my life. I was scared every night when I went to the yards. I wasn't scared of violence; the yards were safer than the neighborhood. I was scared of not being the artist I wanted to be. I was a pre-teen-ager when I started. I was interested in the trains because of the earlier artists I had seen getting up on the trains. Writers back then wanted to feel assured—you would show up with your outline, and your heart would be beating. I suffer when I paint; it was a kind of masochism.

I started off just with my name, and then I moved on to big pictures. Even though I had already stopped painting trains when the M.T.A. came down hard, I thought, Well, they're there for the next generation, you know. I know the M.T.A. always said we were vandals, the writers were violent. The writers were not violent. Now, I'm not saying that some of the kids now who would like to be doing graffiti aren't violent. But they don't know what art is—they have nobody to imitate. I blame the M.T.A. for that. I think that if you buff history you get violence.

A-One (*airily*): "Pictorial." That would be my word for what Lee did. I'd describe that as pictorial graffiti. I would call myself a classic wild-style writer with a strong individual kind of home-boy style, and I would say that what Daze and Crash were doing was like architecture. Some of those Daze pieces, they were so hard, those letters so solid, you could move into them. Put in a radio. Sleep there in the "O."

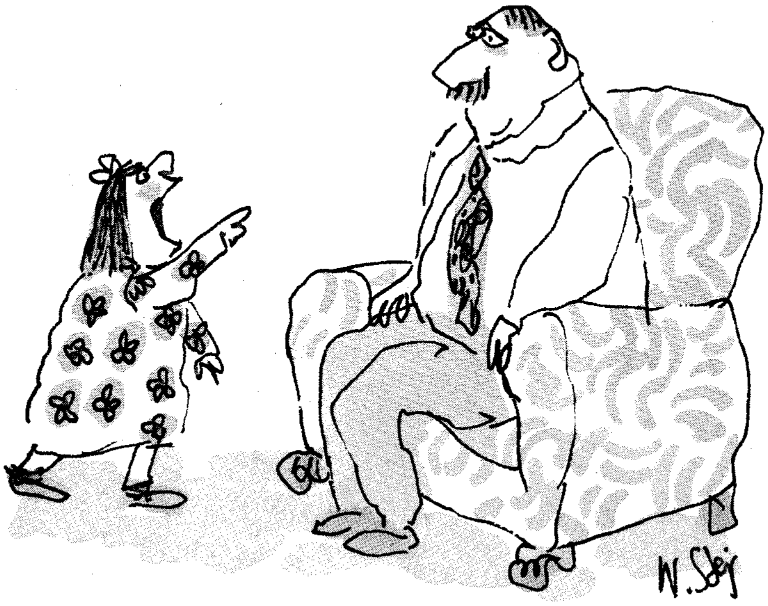
Daze (*a little belligerently*): I was an artist *before* the trains, I was an artist *on* the trains, and I'm an artist now. That's all I ever wanted to be. I was drawing whenever I could as a kid, and I was already trying to do acrylics when I started working on the trains. You know, people want to think this was a folk art, or a naïve art. Which it wasn't. What it was was a *competitive* art. It prepared me for the competition in the art world, which is worse. I stopped being interested in the subways a long, long time ago. It means nothing to me now. Well, it means something. In the art world, the competition takes years to sort out, and it isn't just what you do. It's politics. On the trains, it was what you did, and you had to do it again night after night.

A-One (*fervently*): Absolutely. Put me down saying "Absolutely." It was competition. You'd paint all night, sleep two hours, maybe three, then you'd race to the writer's bench (*a particular bench in the Grand Concourse station, where writers liked to gather to watch the previous evening's work parade by*). When that train came by, you'd *act* cool, but you wouldn't *be* cool. Your heart would be racing. What would you hear? Would they say "That is a fresh burn" or nothing?

Lee (*indignantly*): Once, I went to Los Angeles, and I did a piece there—this was in the early eighties—and all they asked me about was the dogs in the tunnels. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine that happening to Kenny Scharf? Great piece, Kenny. Are there rats in your studio? The M.T.A. *thought* we were vandals, and the galleries *wanted* us to be vandals.

Crash (*sadly*): The thing for me is, the form is still growing—graffiti is not dead—but each of us is sort of exploring his own style now, his own way of looking at it, instead of making up a style and then throwing out that style because it's got to be old hat. Man, you would run through three styles a year. A month. You had to, because of the competition.

A-One (*rabbinically*): I've got a thought on that: A vandal is somebody who throws a brick through a window. An artist is somebody who paints a picture on that window. A great artist is somebody who paints a picture on the window and then throws a brick through it.



"You and I are quits, big boy!"

Unclaimed

The weather a week ago Saturday afternoon—rain, plus lots more rain to come—said, unmistakably, *nap*. We did what seemed like the sensible thing: got in the car, paid the freight at the Queens Midtown Tunnel ($2.50), and kept driving until we hit Uniondale, where, next door to the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, there's a big, comfy Marriott. It turned out that they don't rent rooms by the nap, only by the night ($150 plus). Suddenly, Plan B—a nice spot in the Coliseum parking lot ($3.25)—seemed more sensible. We tilted the front seat all the way back and, with the roof rattling like a maraca, immediately lost consciousness. We were out for a dead-solid hour and a half, and when we woke up, the Coliseum was just sitting there, so we decided what the hell.

Inside, the choices were, in the main arena, Ice Capades ($15, $13, $8) and, in the underground exhibition hall, Waldbaum's 7th Annual Food and Nutrition Exposition (adults $5, seniors $4, children under six free). At the top of the escalator, we found a loose ticket discount coupon ($1 off) and started to feel lucky—a feeling that diminished once we got past the turnstile and realized that the unstated theme of the Food and Nutri-

"Don't give the dog any more coffee."

tion Exposition was "A Celebration of the Modified Freebie." Aladdin Remodelers, of Massapequa Park, was giving away a free kitchen worth $11,750—cabinetry, sink and faucet, dishwasher, island—but not delivery costs, setup charges, or taxes. Cayman Airways and Holiday Inn were giving away a week-long trip for two in the sun, but no meals. The Ultimate Class Limousine people were pushing stork service ("Take your most valuable possession home in style," $25 off) but had nothing to offer in the way of a child-rearing stipend. The best Tropicana could manage was a buy-five-get-one-free deal on juice plus a very long shot at winning a Maytag refrigerator. North Shore University Hospital was willing to measure your glucose and cholesterol—*after* you forked over (a) $5 and (b) some blood.

In this context, Edward Regan, the State Comptroller, radiated unalloyed beneficence. Comptroller Regan himself was actually away for the weekend (maybe taking a nap, maybe doing some stuff that's none of our business), but several of his staff members—Nicky Pion, Mike Kopkin, Rhona Lattanzi, Gerry Giammatteo, John Severance, Bob Austin; i.e., the Office of Unclaimed Funds crowd—were at the Coliseum trying to give away money. Because there are over a half-million people in New York State who have not bothered to cash dividend checks, or have left jobs without picking up their final paychecks, or have given the phone company deposits and then disappeared, or have opened bank accounts and forgotten about them, the law has arranged for Comptroller Regan to wind up perched on a pile of dough that, strictly speaking, doesn't belong to him. (If everybody came running at once, he'd have to fork over $1,700,000,000.) Five days a week he operates an Unclaimed Funds hotline (1-800-221-9311), and once a month he or his cronies show up in a shopping mall or a nursing home or at a Waldbaum's Annual Food and Nutrition Exposition-like event and tries to whittle away at the billion-seven. The Office of Unclaimed Funds booth was equipped with a table, three small file boxes filled with microfiches, a pair of laptop microfiche scanners, and a pile of pamphlets explaining the Comptroller's sincere intentions. How it could be that, two aisles away, hundreds of people were patiently standing three abreast in a line slowly funnelling toward a big sign that said "MEAT," while at the Office of Unclaimed Funds booth there was never more than a trickle of activity, was explained to us by Bob Austin. "Everybody's so skeptical," he said. "They're not accustomed to the state giving money away."

All you had to do was write your name on a sheet of paper, and an Unclaimed Funds person would gladly pull out a microfiche and discover whether there was any good news to report. A man wearing a green plaid shirt, a gray windbreaker, and a gray poplin slouch hat paused in front of the table.

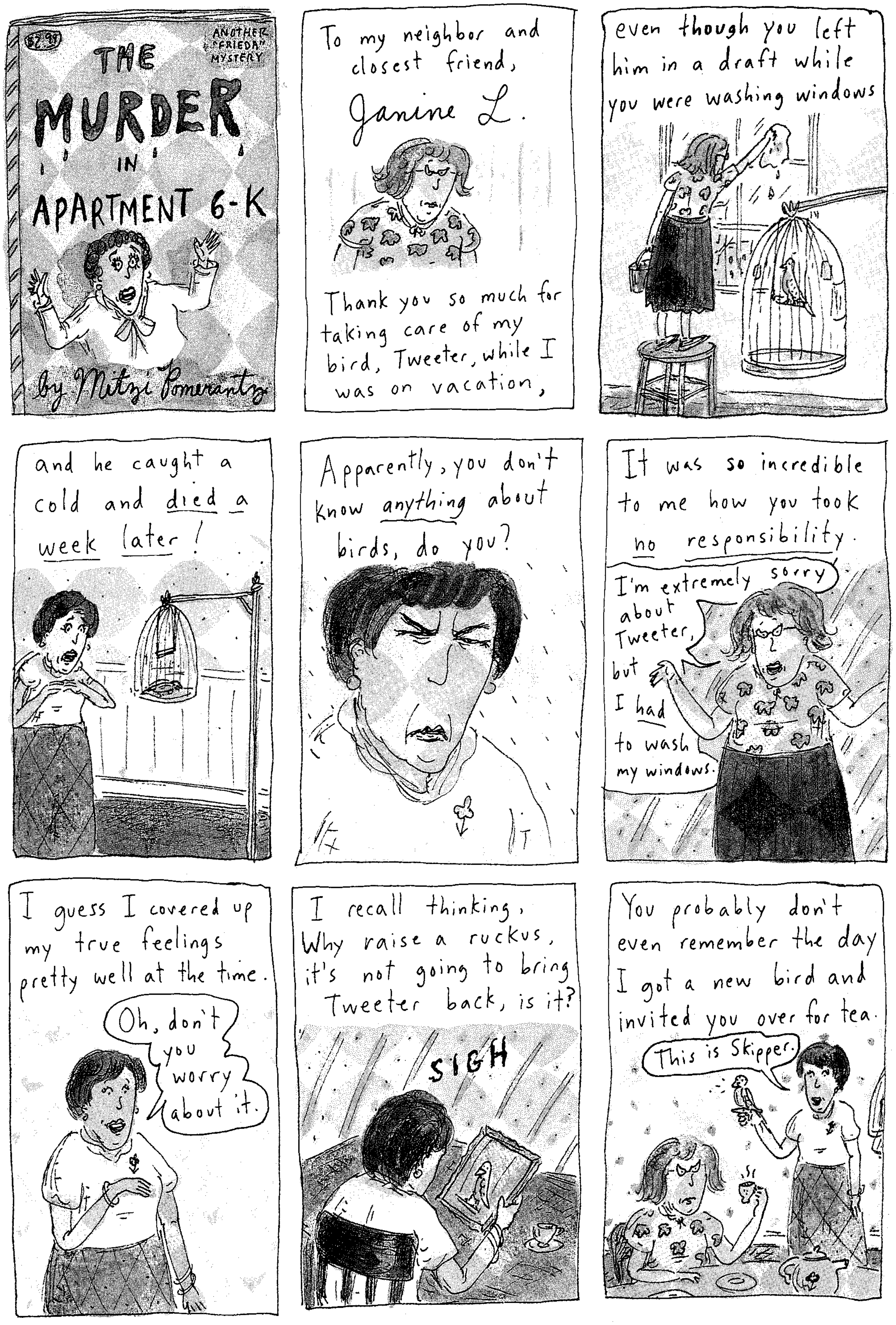
"Would you like us to look up your name and see if New York State is holding any of your money?" Bob Austin asked him.

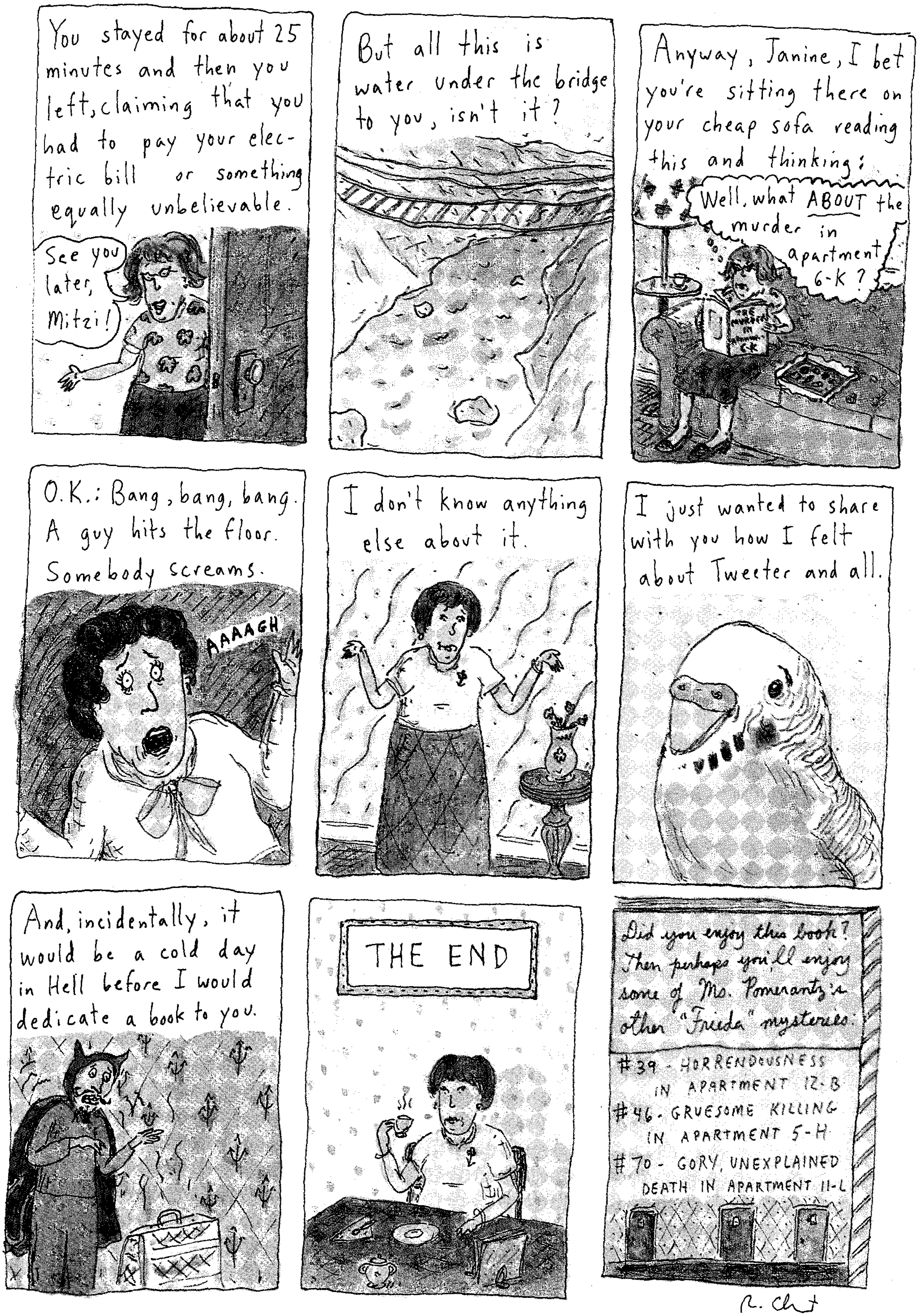
"I'm too hard of hearing," the man said, and walked on.

Diane and Ted gave it a shot. (Diane and Ted have a last name, but it's a family secret.) While Bob Austin read the scanner, Diane leaned across the table with the apprehensive look of someone who had just graduated from the quarter slots to dollar blackjack. When the name of her late father-in-law showed up on the screen, her eyes widened with surprise. "See, my father-in-law's dead since 1970," she said. "After he died, his second wife went back to Italy, and we heard she died there. We know he owned a few stocks, but we don't know what she knew, and she didn't know what she knew, either. So she died."

The microfiches don't reveal dollar amounts; you have to fill out a form and wait a few weeks for the payoff. Fred (like Diane and Ted, a close-to-the-vest guy) turned up in the files twice, which should have made him smile. Because he had already been waiting six months for Albany to send him the title to his new car, however, he was able to modulate his joy.

Nicky Pion's job, back in the home office, is to start processing Diane and Ted and Fred's claims. At one time, she answered hot-line calls in Spanish. "I work in New York now, but I used to work and live in Albany," she said. "A couple of years ago, one of our secretaries found my name in the computer. She said, 'Nicky, that can't be you, can it?' I said, 'It sure is.' See, my insurance company sent thirteen dollars to my old address. One of these days, I'll process my own claim. So far, though, I just haven't had the time to collect."


$2.95
ANOTHER "FRIEDA" MYSTERY
THE MURDER IN APARTMENT 6-K
by Mitzi Pomerantz
To my neighbor and closest friend,
Janine L.
Thank you so much for taking care of my bird, Tweeter, while I was on vacation,
even though you left him in a draft while you were washing windows
and he caught a cold and died a week later!
Apparently, you don't know anything about birds, do you?
It was so incredible to me how you took no responsibility.
I'm extremely sorry about Tweeter, but I had to wash my windows.
I guess I covered up my true feelings pretty well at the time.
Oh, don't you worry about it.
I recall thinking, Why raise a ruckus, it's not going to bring Tweeter back, is it?
SIGH
You probably don't even remember the day I got a new bird and invited you over for tea.
This is Skipper.


You stayed for about 25 minutes and then you left, claiming that you had to pay your electric bill or something equally unbelievable.
See you later, Mitzi!
But all this is water under the bridge to you, isn't it?
Anyway, Janine, I bet you're sitting there on your cheap sofa reading this and thinking:
Well, what ABOUT the murder in apartment 6-K?
THE MURDER IN APARTMENT 6-K
O.K.: Bang, bang, bang. A guy hits the floor. Somebody screams.
AAAAGH
I don't know anything else about it.
I just wanted to share with you how I felt about Tweeter and all.
And, incidentally, it would be a cold day in Hell before I would dedicate a book to you.
THE END
Did you enjoy this book? Then perhaps you'll enjoy some of Ms. Pomerantz's other "Frieda" mysteries.
#39 - HORRENDOUSNESS IN APARTMENT 12-B
#46 - GRUESOME KILLING IN APARTMENT 5-H
#70 - GORY, UNEXPLAINED DEATH IN APARTMENT 11-L

R. Chast

COYOTE V. ACME

In the United States District Court, Southwestern District, Tempe, Arizona
Case No. B19294, Judge Joan Kujava, Presiding

Wile E. Coyote, Plaintiff
-v.-
Acme Company, Defendant

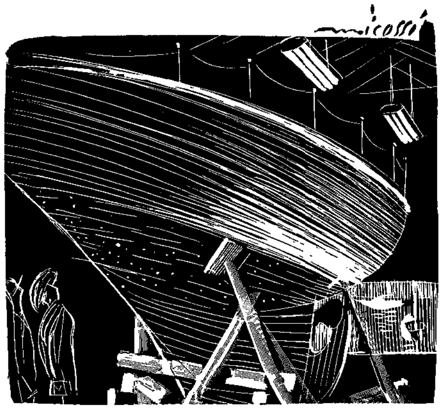
OPENING Statement of Mr. Harold Schoff, attorney for Mr. Coyote: My client, Mr. Wile E. Coyote, a resident of Arizona and contiguous states, does hereby bring suit for damages against the Acme Company, manufacturer and retail distributor of assorted merchandise, incorporated in Delaware and doing business in every state, district, and territory. Mr. Coyote seeks compensation for personal injuries, loss of business income, and mental suffering caused as a direct result of the actions and/or gross negligence of said company, under Title 15 of the United States Code, Chapter 47, section 2072, subsection (a), relating to product liability.

Mr. Coyote states that on eighty-five separate occasions he has purchased of the Acme Company (hereinafter, "Defendant"), through that company's mail-order department, certain products which did cause him bodily injury due to defects in manufacture or improper cautionary labelling. Sales slips made out to Mr. Coyote as proof of purchase are at present in the possession of the Court, marked Exhibit A. Such injuries sustained by Mr. Coyote have temporarily restricted his ability to make a living in his profession of predator. Mr. Coyote is self-employed and thus not eligible for Workmen's Compensation.

Mr. Coyote states that on December 13th he received of Defendant via parcel post one Acme Rocket Sled. The intention of Mr. Coyote was to use the Rocket Sled to aid him in pursuit of his prey. Upon receipt of the Rocket Sled Mr. Coyote removed it from its wooden shipping crate and, sighting his prey in the distance, activated the ignition. As Mr. Coyote gripped the handlebars, the Rocket Sled accelerated with such sudden and precipitate force as to stretch Mr. Coyote's forelimbs to a length of fifty feet. Subsequently, the rest of Mr. Coyote's body shot forward with a violent jolt, causing severe strain to his back and neck and placing him unexpectedly astride the Rocket Sled. Disappearing over the horizon at such speed as to leave a diminishing jet trail along its path, the Rocket Sled soon brought Mr. Coyote abreast of his prey. At that moment the animal he was pursuing veered sharply to the right. Mr. Coyote vigorously attempted to follow this maneuver but was unable to, due to poorly designed steering on the Rocket Sled and a faulty or nonexistent braking system. Shortly thereafter, the unchecked progress of the Rocket Sled brought it and Mr. Coyote into collision with the side of a mesa.

Paragraph One of the Report of Attending Physician (Exhibit B), prepared by Dr. Ernest Grosscup, M.D., D.O., details the multiple fractures, contusions, and tissue damage suffered by Mr. Coyote as a result of this collision. Repair of the injuries required a full bandage around the head (excluding the ears), a neck brace, and full or partial casts on all four legs.

Hampered by these injuries, Mr. Coyote was nevertheless obliged to support himself. With this in mind, he purchased of Defendant as an aid to mobility one pair of Acme Rocket Skates. When he attempted to use this product, however, he became involved in an accident remarkably similar to that which occurred with the Rocket Sled. Again, Defendant sold over the counter, without caveat, a product which attached powerful jet engines (in this case, two) to inadequate vehicles, with little or no provision for passenger safety. Encumbered by his heavy casts, Mr. Coyote lost control of the Rocket Skates soon after strapping them on, and collided with a roadside billboard so violently as to leave a hole in the shape of his full silhouette.

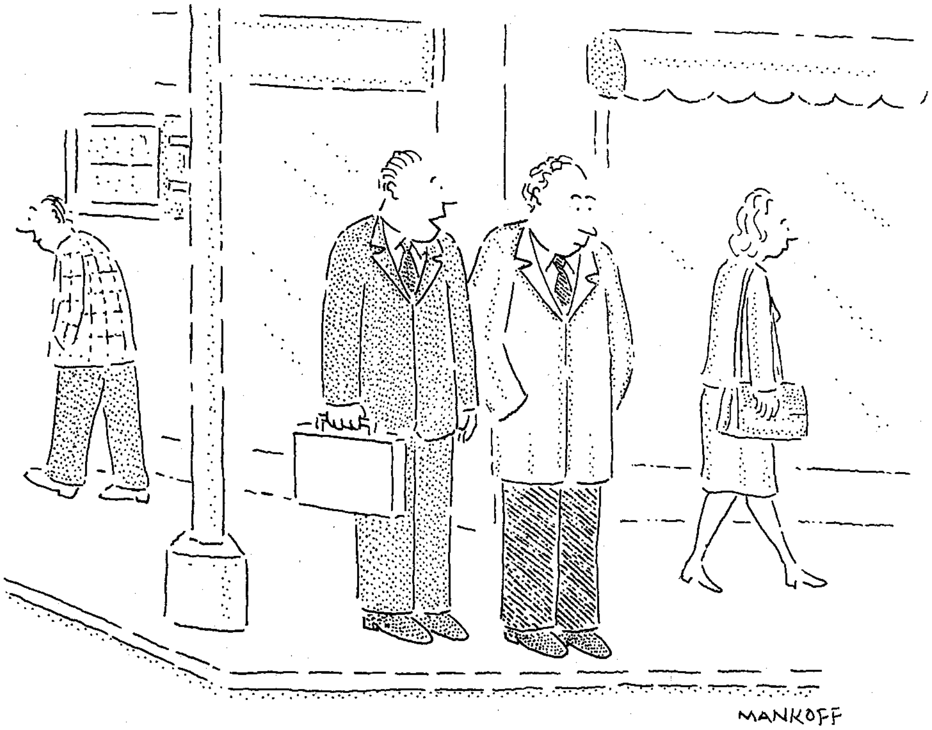


Mr. Coyote states that on occasions too numerous to list in this document he has suffered mishaps with explosives purchased of Defendant: the Acme "Little Giant" Firecracker, the Acme Self-Guided Aerial Bomb, etc. (For a full listing, see the Acme Mail Order Explosives Catalogue and attached deposition, entered in evidence as Exhibit C.) Indeed, it is safe to say that not once has an explosive purchased of Defendant by Mr. Coyote performed in an expected manner. To cite just one example: At the expense of much time and personal effort, Mr. Coyote constructed around the outer rim of a butte a wooden trough beginning at the top of the butte and spiralling downward around it to some few feet above a black X painted on the desert floor. The trough was designed in such a way that a spherical explosive of the type sold by Defendant would roll easily and swiftly down to the point of detonation indicated by the X. Mr. Coyote placed a generous pile of birdseed directly on the X, and then, carrying the spherical Acme Bomb (Catalogue # 78-832), climbed to the top of the butte. Mr. Coyote's prey, seeing the birdseed, approached, and Mr. Coyote proceeded to light the fuse. In an instant, the fuse burned down to the stem, causing the bomb to detonate.

In addition to reducing all Mr. Coyote's careful preparations to naught, the premature detonation of Defendant's product resulted in the following disfigurements to Mr. Coyote:

1. Severe singeing of the hair on the head, neck, and muzzle.
2. Sooty discoloration.
3. Fracture of the left ear at the stem, causing the ear to dangle in the aftershock with a creaking noise.
4. Full or partial combustion of whiskers, producing kinking, frazzling, and ashy disintegration.
5. Radical widening of the eyes, due to brow and lid charring.

WE come now to the Acme Spring-Powered Shoes. The remains of a pair of these purchased by



"Women want more these days, Bill—it's not enough just to be a jerk anymore."

• •

Mr. Coyote on June 23rd are Plaintiff's Exhibit D. Selected fragments have been shipped to the metallurgical laboratories of the University of California at Santa Barbara for analysis, but to date no explanation has been found for this product's sudden and extreme malfunction. As advertised by Defendant, this product is simplicity itself: two wood-and-metal sandals, each attached to milled-steel springs of high tensile strength and compressed in a tightly coiled position by a cocking device with a lanyard release. Mr. Coyote believed that this product would enable him to pounce upon his prey in the initial moments of the chase, when swift reflexes are at a premium.

To increase the shoes' thrusting power still further, Mr. Coyote affixed them by their bottoms to the side of a large boulder. Adjacent to the boulder was a path which Mr. Coyote's prey was known to frequent. Mr. Coyote put his hind feet in the wood-and-metal sandals and crouched in readiness, his right forepaw holding firmly to the lanyard release. Within a short time Mr. Coyote's prey did indeed appear on the path coming toward him. Unsuspecting, the prey stopped near Mr. Coyote, well within range of the springs at full extension. Mr. Coyote gauged the distance with care and proceeded to pull the lanyard release.

At this point, Defendant's product should have thrust Mr. Coyote forward and away from the boulder. Instead, for reasons yet unknown, the Acme Spring-Powered Shoes thrust the boulder away from Mr. Coyote. As the intended prey looked on unharmed, Mr. Coyote hung suspended in air. Then the twin springs recoiled, bringing Mr. Coyote to a violent feet-first collision with the boulder, the full weight of his head and forequarters falling upon his lower extremities.

The force of this impact then caused the springs to rebound, whereupon Mr. Coyote was thrust skyward. A second recoil and collision followed. The boulder, meanwhile, which was roughly ovoid in shape, had begun to bounce down a hillside, the coiling and recoiling of the springs adding to its velocity. At each bounce, Mr. Coyote came into contact with the boulder, or the boulder came into contact with Mr. Coyote, or both came into contact with the ground. As the grade was a long one, this process continued for some time.

The sequence of collisions resulted in systemic physical damage to Mr. Coyote, viz., flattening of the cranium, sideways displacement of the tongue, reduction of length of legs and upper body, and compression of vertebrae from base of tail to head. Repetition of blows along a vertical axis produced a series of regular horizontal folds in Mr. Coyote's body tissues—a rare and painful condition which caused Mr. Coyote to expand upward and contract downward alternately as he walked, and to emit an off-key, accordionlike wheezing with every step. The distracting and embarrassing nature of this symptom has been a major impediment to Mr. Coyote's pursuit of a normal social life.

As the Court is no doubt aware, Defendant has a virtual monopoly of manufacture and sale of goods required by Mr. Coyote's work. It is our contention that Defendant has used its market advantage to the detriment of the consumer of such specialized products as itching powder, giant kites, Burmese tiger traps, anvils, and two-hundred-foot-long rubber bands. Much as he has come to mistrust Defendant's products, Mr. Coyote has no other domestic source of supply to which to turn. One can only wonder what our trading partners in Western Europe and Japan would make of such a situation, where a giant company is allowed to victimize the consumer in the most reckless and wrongful manner over and over again.

Mr. Coyote respectfully requests that the Court regard these larger economic implications and assess punitive damages in the amount of seventeen million dollars. In addition, Mr. Coyote seeks actual damages (missed meals, medical expenses, days lost from professional occupation) of one million dollars; general damages (mental suffering, injury to reputation) of twenty million dollars; and attorney's fees of seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Total damages: thirty-eight million seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars. By awarding Mr. Coyote the full amount, this Court will censure Defendant, its directors, officers, shareholders, successors, and assigns, in the only language they understand, and reaffirm the right of the individual predator to equal protection under the law.

—IAN FRAZIER

WITH JAZZ

I NEVER paid much attention to current events, all the trouble in the world you hear about. I was too busy raising a family. But my children have all gone now and I've started to think about things that go on. Why would my daughter live with a man and get ready to raise a baby and refuse to marry the guy? Why would my son live in a cabin by the river and not see a soul for months on end? But that's just personal. I'm thinking of the bigger picture, too. It seems a person barely lives long enough to begin to see where his little piece fits in the universal puzzle. I'm not old but I imagine that old people start to figure out how to live just when it's too late.

These thoughts come up at my weekly neighborhood group. It started out as a weight-reducing club, but we kept meeting even after we all got skinny. Now on Fridays after work a bunch of us get together at somebody's house and talk about life, in a sort of talk-show format. Although we laugh a lot, for us it's survival. And it helps me think.

It's so hard to be nice to people. It's something you have to learn. I try to be nice, but it's complicated. You start feeling guilty for your own failures of generosity at just about the same point in life when you start feeling angry, even less willing to give. The two feelings collide—feeling gracious and feeling mean. When you get really old, they say, you go right back to being a child, spiteful and selfish, and you don't give a damn what people think. In between childhood and old age, you have this bubble of consciousness—and conscience. It's enough to drive you crazy.

After our group session last Friday, I went up to Paducah, across the county line, hoping to see this guy I know. He calls himself Jazz, but his real name is Peter. He always hated that name. Kids in school would tease him. "Where's your peter?," "Oh, you don't look like a peter," etc. Some kids from my distant past used the word "goober," the first name I ever heard for the secret male anatomy. I thought they were saying "cooper." That didn't make any sense to me. Then I learned that the correct word was "goober." I learned that in the fourth grade from Donna Lee Washam, the day she led me on an expedition to a black-walnut tree on the far edge of the playground. She came back to the classroom with two black walnuts in her panties and giggled all afternoon as she squirmed in her seat. Across the aisle and a couple of seats up, Jerry Ray Baxter sometimes took his goober out and played with it. He couldn't talk plain, and after that year he stopped coming to school.

Jazz was at the Top Line, where I thought he'd be. He was lounging at the bar, with a draught beer, shooting the breeze. When he saw me he grinned slowly and pulled a new brassiere out of his pocket, dangling it right there between the jug of beet-pickled eggs and the jug of pickled pigs' feet. Ed, the bartender, swung his head like he'd seen it all. "There you go again, Jazz, pulling off women's clothes."

Jazz said, "No, this is my magic trick."

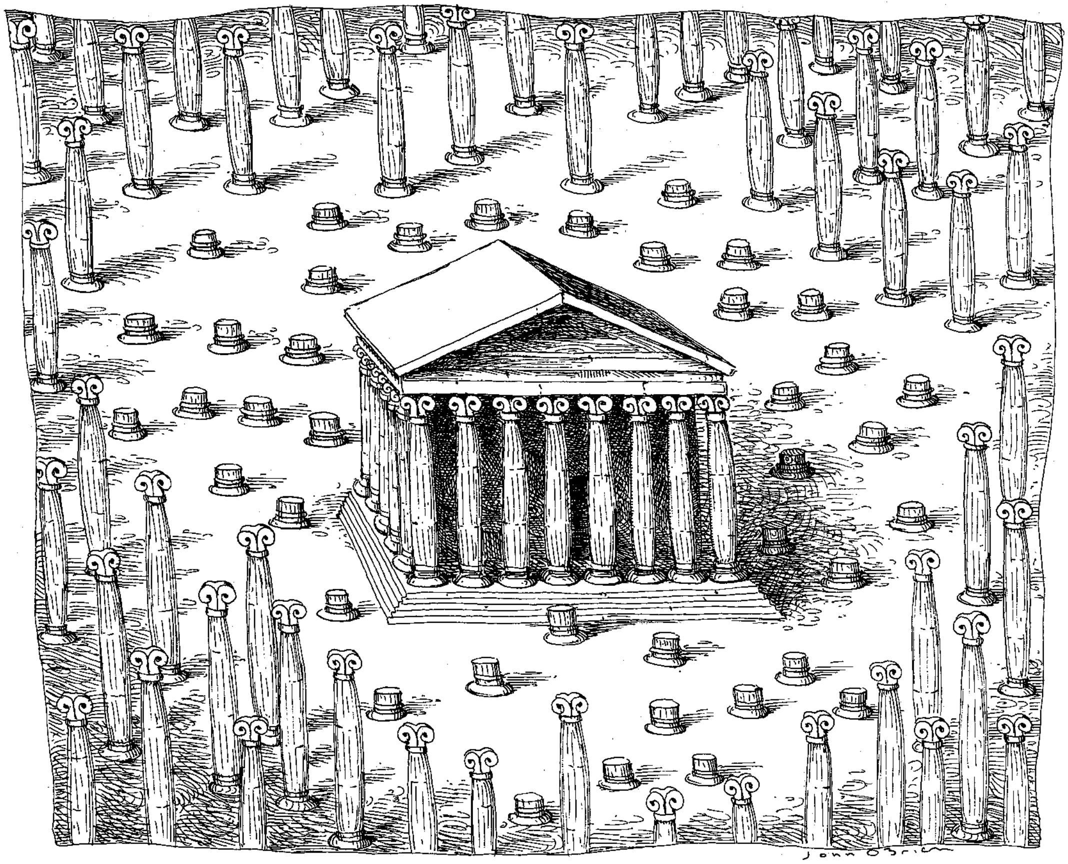
I stuffed the bra in my purse. "Thanks, Jazz, I guess you knew my boobs were falling down."

He came from down in Obion, Tennessee, and grew up duck hunting around Reelfoot Lake. Now he goes to France and brings back suitcases full of French underwear. He sells it to a boutique and occasionally to friends. It's designer stuff and the sizes are different from here. His ex-wife gets it at cost from a supplier in Paris where she works. He goes over there once a year or so to see his kids. Jazz works construction and saves his money, and then quits and lights out for France. I've got a drawerful of expensive bras he's given me—snap-fronts, plunges, crisscrosses, strapless—all in lace and satin.

"That's a special number," he said, moving close to me. "Scalloped lace and satin stretch. Molded cup, underwire. I'll want to check the fitting later."

I grinned. "We'll see about that, Jazz. Tonight I feel like getting drunk."

"You're gonna be a granny again in a few months, Chrissy. Is



that how an old granny's supposed to act?" he teased.

"But I'm happy, damn it! I feel like I'm in love."

"One of these days I'll make you fall in love with me, Chrissy."

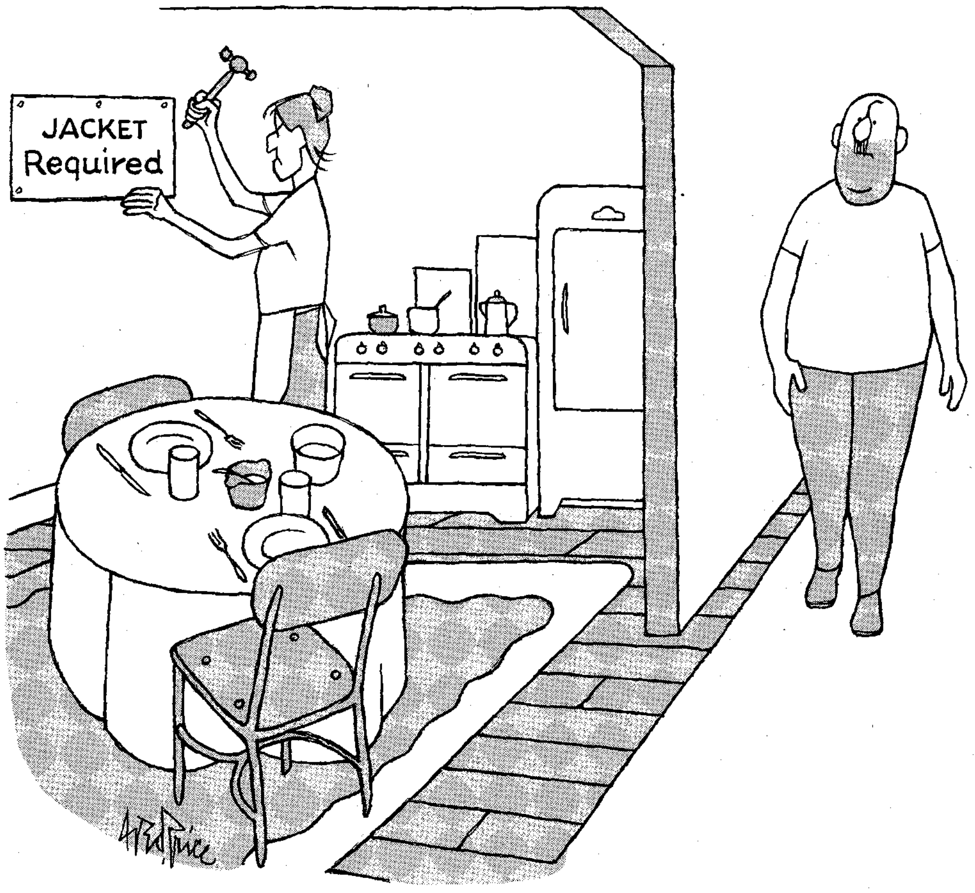
I ordered a bourbon. What Jazz needed, I thought, was a woman who felt romantic about him. But he'd never make a claim on a woman who cared about him. He'd always step aside and let the woman go fall in love with some clod who jerked her around.

Glancing up at a TV newsbreak—a local update on water pollution—I said, "All the mussels in the lake are dying. It's all those pesticides."

"I heard it was last year's drought," said Jazz. "That's natural."

"Here I am celebrating a new baby coming into the world—for what? To see a dead lake? And air not fit to breathe?"

Jazz touched my shoulder, to steady me. "World's always had trouble. No baby ever set foot in the Garden of Eden."



I laughed. "That's just like you to say that, Jazz."

"You think you know me, don't you?" he said.

"I know you well enough to feel sorry I always treat you so bad."

Ed set my drink before me and I took it eagerly. I said to Jazz, "Why don't you ever get mad at me, tell me off?"

He punched my arm, buddy style. "You should never go away mad at a person, because one of you might get killed on the way home."

The regular crowd was there at the Top Line—good old boys who worked at the plants, guys wandering around loose on a Friday night while their wives took the kids to the mall. A tall man entering the bar caught my eye. He walked like he had money. He had on an iridescent-green shirt, with a subtle paisley design that made my eyes tingle. His pants had cowboy-style piping on the pocket plackets. Over the shirt he wore a suède vest with fuchsia embroidery and zippered pockets.

"That's Buck Joiner, the radio guy," Jazz said, reading my mind.

Buck Joiner was the d.j. I listened to while I was getting ready for work. His "Morning Mania" show was a roaring streak of pranks and risqué jokes and call-in giveaways. Once, he actually telephoned Colonel Qaddafi in Libya. He got through to the palace and talked to some official who spoke precise English with a Middle Eastern accent.

As soon as I felt I'd had enough bourbon, I marched over to Buck Joiner's table, wielding my glass.

"I listen to you," I said. "I've got your number on my dial."

He seemed bored. It was like meeting Bob Dylan or some big shot you know won't be friendly.

"I called you up once," I went on recklessly. "You were giving away tickets to the Ray Stevens show. I was trying to be the twenty-fifth caller. But my timing wasn't right."

"Too bad," he said, deadpan. He was with a couple of guys in suits. Blanks.

"I've got to work on my timing." I paused, scrambling for contact. "You should interview my Friday-afternoon talk group."

"What's that?"

"We're a group of ladies. We get together every Friday and talk about life."

"What about life?" Out of the side of his face, he smirked for the benefit of the suits.

"The way things are going. Stuff." My mind went blank. I knew there was more to it than that. Right then, I really wanted him to interview our group. I knew we sparkled with life and intelligence. Rita had her opinions on day care, and Dorothy could rip into the abortion issue, and Phyllis believed that psychiatrists were witch doctors. Me, I could do my Bette Davis imitations.

"Here's my card," I said, whipping one out of my purse. I'd ordered these about a month ago, just for the privilege of saying that.

"It's nice to meet a fan," he said with stretched lips—not a true smile.

"Don't give me that, buddy. If it weren't for your listeners, you wouldn't be sitting here with all that fancy piping scrawled all over you."

I rejoined Jazz, who had been watching out for me. "I'd like to see Oprah nail him to the wall," I said to Jazz.

Of course, I was embarrassed. That

CREATING THE WORLD

Celestials at the Board of Projects burst into laughter,
For one of them has designed a hedgehog,
Another, not to be left behind, a soprano:
Eyelashes, a bust, and ringlets, plenty of ringlets.

It is superb fun in the ocean of seething energy,
Among bursts and clacks announcing electric currents.
Buckets of protocolors gurgle, protobrushes labor,
A mighty whirl of almost galaxies beyond nearly windows
And pure radiance that has never experienced clouds.

They blow conchs, somersault in protospace,
In their realm of archetypes, the seventh heaven.
The earth is practically ready, its rivers sparkle,
Forests cover it, and every single creature
Waits for its name. Thunder strolls the horizon
But the herds in the grass do not lift their heads.

Towns come to be, narrow streets,
A chamber pot poured out a window, laundry.
And immediately freeways to the airport,
A monument at a crossroads, a park, a stadium
For thousands when they get up and roar: goal!

To invent length, width, height,
Two times two and the force of gravity
Would be quite enough, but on top of it panties
With lace, a hippopotamus, the beak of a toucan,
A chastity belt with its terrible teeth,
A hammerhead shark, a visored helmet,
Plus time, that is, a division into was and will be.

Gloria, gloria, sing objects called to being.
Hearing them, Mozart sits down at the pianoforte
And composes music that had been ready
Before he himself was born in Salzburg.

If only it all could last, but no way.
It iridesces, passes, turns inside a soap bubble
Together with an invocation the Celestials address
to mortals:

"Oh, dizzy tribe, how not to look at you with pity!
Your bright rags, your dances
Seemingly profligate but in truth pathetic,
Mirrors in which you leave a face with earrings,
Painted eyelids, eyelashes with mascara.
Oh, to have so little, nothing except feasts of love!
How feeble your defense against the abyss!"

And the sun rises and the sun sets,
And the sun rises and the sun sets
While they go on running, running.

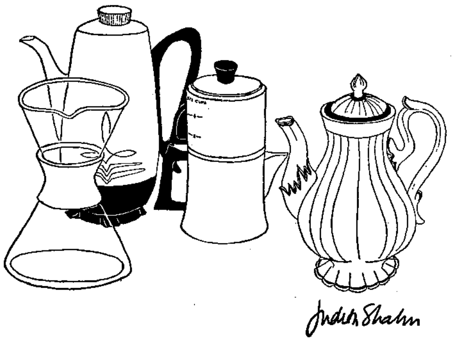
—Czeslaw Milosz

(*Translated, from the Polish, by the author and Robert Hass.*)

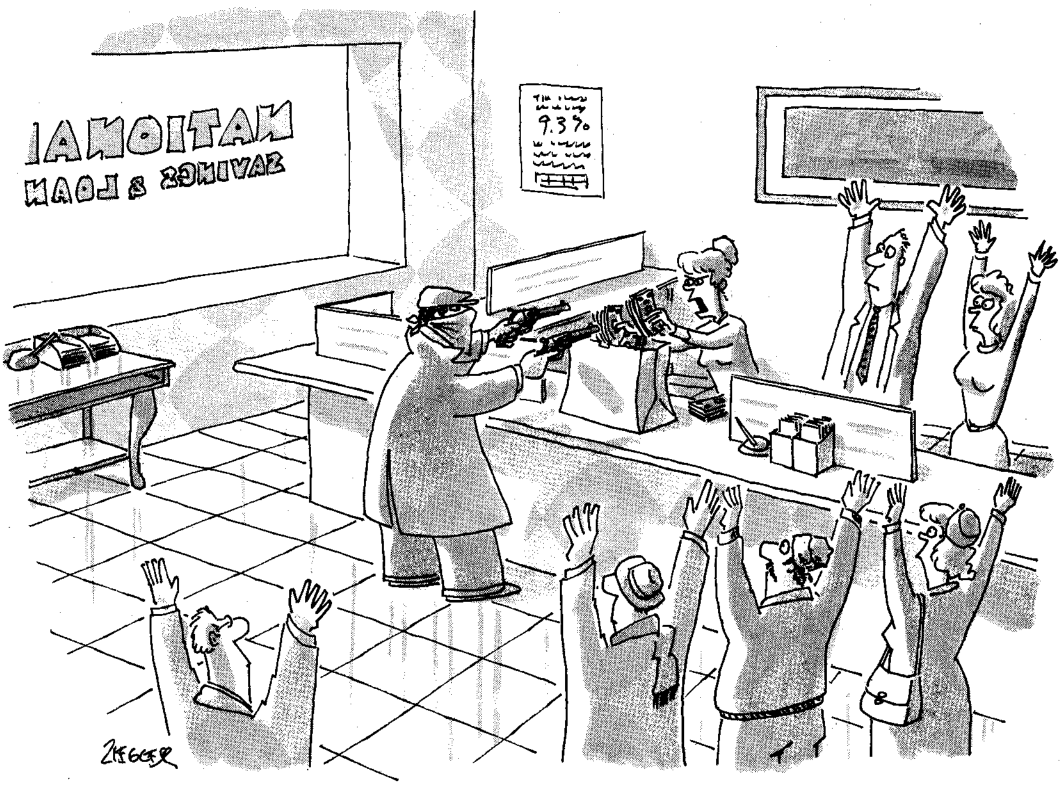
• •

was the trouble. I was lost somewhere between being nice and being mean. I shouldn't drink. I don't know why I was so hard on the d.j., but he was a man I had depended on to start my day, and he turned out to be a shit. From now on I'd listen to his show and think, Stuck-up turdface. Yet there I was in a French bra and an unusual amount of cleavage for this area. I didn't know what I was getting at. Jazz was smiling, touching my hand, ordering me another drink. Jazz wore patience like adhesive tape.

In bits and pieces, I've told this at the Friday talk group: My first husband, Jim Ed, was my high-school boyfriend. We married when we were seniors, and they didn't let me graduate, because I was pregnant. I used to say that I barely understood how those things worked, but that was a lie. Too often I exaggerate my innocence, as if trying to excuse myself for some of the messes I've gotten myself into. Looking back now, I see that I latched on to Jim Ed because I was afraid there'd never be another opportunity in my life, and he was the best of the pickings around there. That's the way I do everything. I grab anything that looks like a good chance, right then and there. I even tend to overeat, as if I'm afraid I won't ever get another good meal. "That's the farm girl in you," my second husband, George, always said. He was an analytical person and had a theory about everything. When he talked about the Depression mentality of our parents' generation he made it sound physically disgusting. He had been to college. I never did go back and get my high-school diploma, but that's something I'm thinking about doing now. George couldn't just enjoy something for what it was. We'd grill steaks and he'd come up with some reason why we were grilling steaks. He said it went back to caveman behavior. He said we were acting out an ancient scene. He made me feel trapped in history, as though we hadn't advanced since cavemen. I don't guess people have changed that much, though, really. I bet back in caveman times there was some know-it-all who made his woman feel dumb.



After a while, I didn't pay any attention to George, but then my little daughter died. She had meningitis, and it was fairly sudden and horrible. I was still in shock a month later, when George started nagging at me about proper grief displays and the stages of grief. I blew up. I told him to walk. What we really should have done was share the grief. I'm sure the most basic textbook would say that. But instead he's lecturing me on my grief. You can't live with somebody who lectures you on your grief. I'll have my grief in peace, I told him. Kathy wasn't his daughter. He couldn't possibly know how I felt. That was so long ago he doesn't seem real to me. He still lives around here. I've heard that he married again and that he raises rabbits and lives out in the country, out near Bardwell—none of which I would have ever imagined. But, you know, as small as this place is, I've never laid eyes on him again. Maybe he's changed so much I just don't recognize him when I see him.



“It's people like you, young man, who ruin it for everyone else!”

• •

“HOW did you just happen to have that bra in your pocket, Jazz?” I wanted to know, but he only grinned. It was like carrying around condoms in case of emergency, I thought. The bra was just my size. I'd put it on in the rest room. The one I had worn was stretching out, and I left it in the trash can. Let people wonder.

At first, I thought Kathy just had the flu. She had a fever and she said her head was splitting—a remark so calm that she might have said her hands were dirty in the same tone. It was summer, a strange time for flu, so I hurried all the kids on out to their grandmother's that Sunday, like always, thinking the country air would make Kathy feel better. Don and Phil kept aggravating her because she didn't want to play in Mama's attic or go out to the barn. She lay around under one of Mama's quilts, and I thought later, with a hideous realization, that she somehow knew she was going to die. You never know what a child is thinking, or how scared they might be, or how they've blown something up in their imagination. She was twelve, and she'd just started her period a couple of months before. I thought her sickness might be related to that. The doctor just laughed at me when I brought that up. Can you imagine the nerve? It's only now that I've gotten mad about that. But I hear that that doctor has had a stroke and is in a nursing home. What good do bad feelings do when so much time has passed? That's what Jazz says.

George blamed me for taking her out to Mama's that day. He was gone to an engineering convention in Nashville; he was a chemical engineer at Carbide then. He said there was no reason a child shouldn't recover from meningitis. He wagged a book in my face, but I refused to read what he had found on the disease. I thought it would kill me to know that her death was my fault. I guess George wasn't such a bad guy. He just had his ways. I think we all do and none of us knows how to be sensitive enough, it seems. He probably just didn't know how to deal with the situation. It occurred to me recently that maybe he felt guilty for being away at the time, just as I felt guilty for not noticing how quiet and withdrawn she was, as though she was figuring it all out for herself. Kathy was in 4-H, and that year she was working on a Holly Hobbie display for the fair—the little girl hiding her face in the calico bonnet. Kathy sewed the clothes herself, and she was making a little stuffed dog and decorating a flower basket for the scene. I still have that unfinished Holly Hobbie scene—in the closet in a stereo box. I should probably get rid of it, because if Kathy had lived she would have grown out of that phase, but all I have is those little scraps of the way Kathy was, the only reality she ever had.

Don and Phil grew up and left as soon as they got cars. Can you believe anybody would name their sons after the Everly Brothers? I reckon I'd still do something that silly. But I never told them we named them for the Everly Brothers. Jim Ed, the father of all my children, loved the Everly Brothers, and he used to play them in his truck, back when eight-track tape decks were a new thing. Jim Ed was loose about a lot of things, and he never criticized me the way George did. I don't know if he blamed me about Kathy. I have a feeling that if we'd stuck it out we could have learned to love each other better. But he was restless, and he couldn't hang around when we needed him most. He moved over to Cairo and worked on the riverboats—still does. I guess he has some kind of life. The boys see him. Don's wife ran off with one of the riverboat guys and Don lives in a cabin over there. I don't see him very much. He brought me a giant catfish, a mud cat, on Mother's Day. Catfish that big aren't really good to eat, though. He sets trotlines and just lives in the wilderness. I doubt if he'll ever marry again. Phil is the only one of my children who turned out normal. Now, what is there to say about that? A wife with a tortilla face and bad taste in clothes, spoiled kids, living room decorated with brass geese and fish. I go there and my skin breaks out. There's no pleasing me, I guess.

Last week, Laura—my other daughter, the baby—wrote me that she was pregnant. She's barely divorced from this museum director she met at school—he restored old pieces of pottery, glued them together. He made a good living but she wasn't satisfied. Now she's going to be tied down with a baby and a man, this Nick, who does seasonal work of some sort. They're living in his home town, a little place in Arizona, in the desert. I can't imagine what would grow there.

Laura, on the telephone this past Sunday, said, "I don't want to get married again. I don't trust it anymore. And I want to be free of all that bureaucratic crap. I trust Nick more than I trust the government."

"You need the legal protection," I said. "What if something happened to him? What if he ran off and left you? I can tell you exactly how that works."

"I'd have to murder Nick to get him out of my life! Honestly, he's being so devoted it's unbelievable."

"I guess that's why I don't believe it."

"Come on, Mom. Just think, you're going to be a grandma again! Aren't you going to come out when the baby's born? Isn't that what mothers do?"

Laura was five when Kathy died. We didn't take her to the funeral. We told her Kathy had gone off to live with Holly Hobbie in New York. If I could undo that lie, I would. It was worse when she found out the truth, because she was old enough then to understand and the shock hurt her more. I thought my heart would break when I saw Jim Ed at the funeral. I saw him alone only once, for a few minutes in the corridor before the service started, but we couldn't speak what we felt. Jim Ed was crying, and I wanted to cling to him, but we could see George in the other room, standing beside a floral display—a stranger.

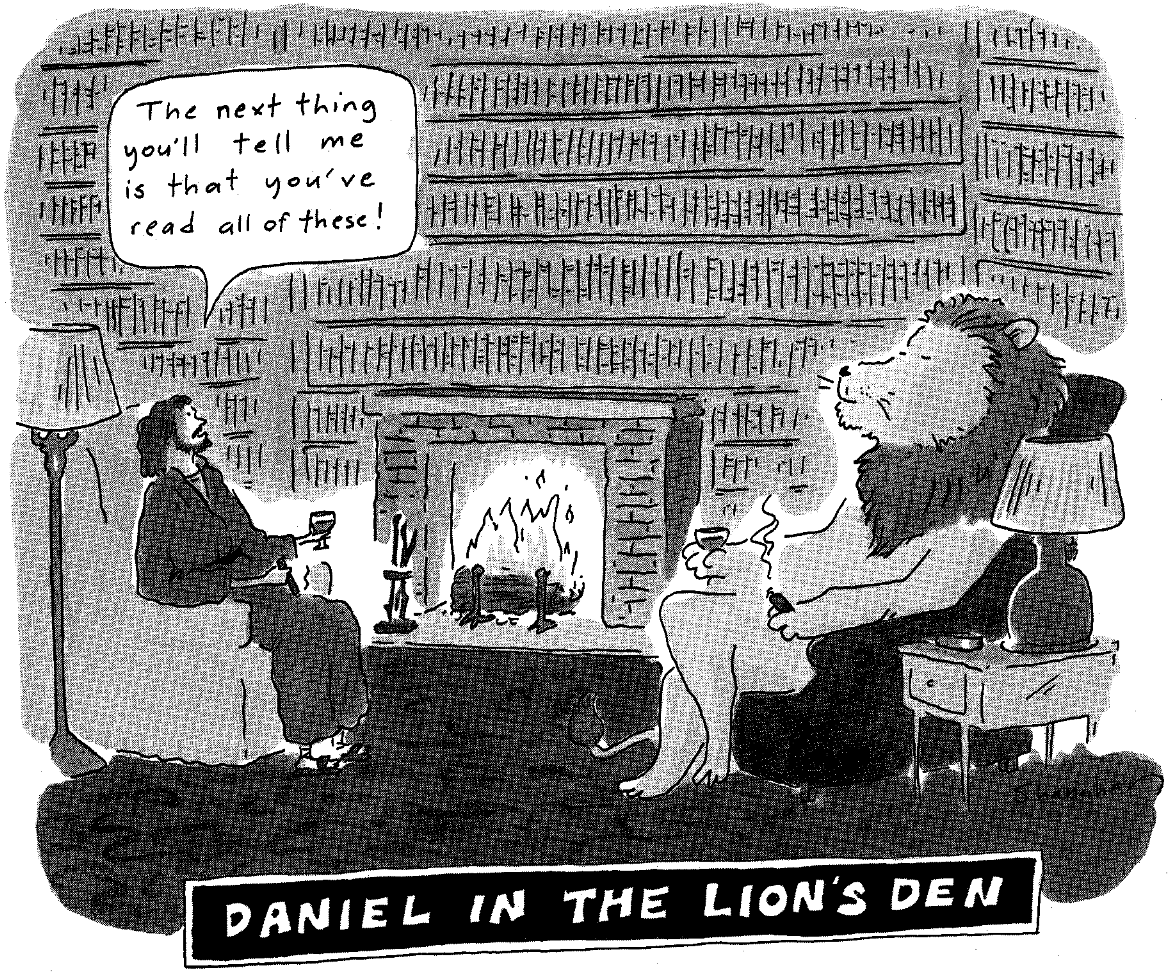
JAZZ said, "Ever notice how at night it's scary because you feel like your secrets are all exposed, but you trick yourself into thinking they're safe in the dark? Smoky bars, candlelight—that's what all that atmosphere shit is about."

"That's what I always say," I said, a little sarcastically. Sometimes Jazz seemed to be fishing around for something to say and then just making something up to sound deep.

We were driving to see my son Don out at his cabin by the river. It was Jazz's idea, a crazy notion that seized him. He said he felt like driving. He said I needed some air. He didn't let me finish my last drink.

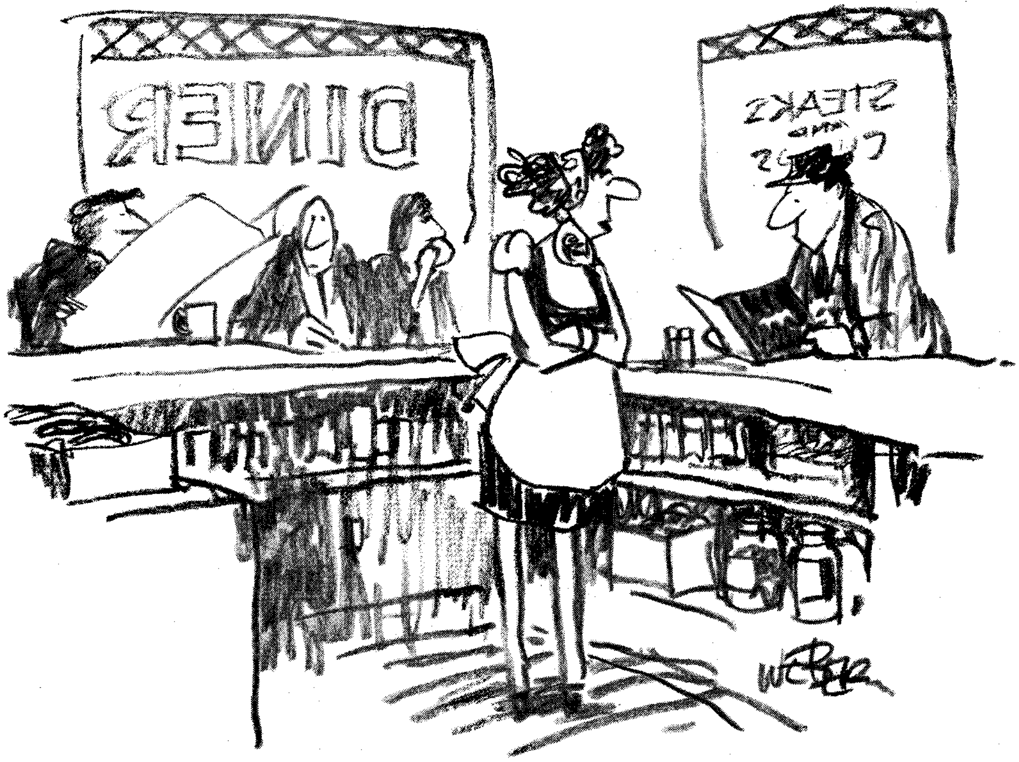
I met Jazz a year ago, in traffic court. We'd both been in minor fender benders on the same road on the same day, at different times. We'd both failed to yield. I remember Jazz saying to me, "I hope that's not a reflection on my character. Normally, I'm a very yielding guy." That day Jazz had on a plaid flannel shirt and boot-flared jeans and a cowboy hat—the usual garb for a man around here. But it was his boots I loved. Pointy-toed, deep-maroon, with insets of Elvis's photograph just above the ankles. He'd found the boots in France. That night we went out for barbecue and he gave me some peach-blush panties with a black lace overlay. We had been friends since then, but we never seemed to get serious. I thought he had a big block of fear inside him.

The cab of his truck was stuffy, that peculiar oil-and-dust smell of every man's truck I've ever been in. I lowered the window and felt the mellow river breeze. Jazz chattered non-stop until we got deep into the country. Then he seemed to hush, as though we


The next thing you'll tell me is that you've read all of these!
DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN
Shanahan

were entering a grand old church.

We were travelling on a state road, its winding curves settled comfortably through the bottomland, with its swampy and piney smells. There were no houses, no lights. Now and then we passed an area where kudzu made the telephone poles and bushes look as though they were a giant's furniture covered up with protective sheets. At a stop sign I told Jazz to go straight instead of following the main road. Soon there was a turnoff, unmarked except for an old sign for a church that I knew had burned down in the fifties. We saw an abandoned pickup straddling the ditch. When the road turned to gravel, I counted the turnoffs, looking for the fourth one. Jazz shifted gears and we chugged up a little hill.



"Pecan pie with rum-raisin ice cream is the best revenge."

• •

"Reckon why he lives way off out here?" Jazz said as he braked and shut off the engine. There were no lights at the cabin, and Don's motorbike was gone. Jazz went over into the bushes for a minute. It was a half-moon night, the kind of night that made you see things in the silhouettes. I thought I saw Don standing by the side of the cabin, peering around the corner, watching us.

Jazz reached through the truck's open window and honked the horn.

I heard an owl answer the horn. When I was little I thought owls were messengers from the preachers in charge of Judgment Day. "Who will be the ones?" I remember our preacher saying. "Who?" Even then I pictured Judgment Day as an orchestrated extravaganza, like a telethon or a musical salute. I never took religion seriously. I'm glad I didn't force my children into its frightful clutches. But maybe that was the trouble, after all.

We stood on the sagging porch, loaded with fishnets and crates of empties—Coke and beer bottles. The lights from the pickup reflected Jazz and me against the cabin windows. I tried the door, and it opened into the kitchen.

"Don?" I called.

I found the kitchen light, just a bulb and string. The cord was new. It still had that starched feel, and the little metal bell on the end knot was shiny and sharp. It made me think of our old bathroom light when Jim Ed and I first married. It was the first thing I'd touch in the morning when I'd get up and rush to the bathroom to throw up.

The table was set for one, with the plate turned face over and the glass upside down. Another glass contained an assortment of silverware. A little tray held grape jelly and sugar and instant coffee and an upside-down mug.

The cabin was just one room, and the daybed was neatly made, spread with one of my old quilts. I sat down on the bed. I felt strange, as though all my life I had been zigzagging down a wild trail to this particular place. I stared at the familiar pattern of the quilt, the scraps of the girls' dresses and the boys' shirts. Kathy had pieced some of the squares. If I looked hard, I could probably pick out some of her childish stitches.

"This is weird," said Jazz. He was studying some animal bones spread out on a long table fashioned from a door. "What do you reckon he's aiming to do with these?"

"He always liked biology," I said, rising from the bed. I smoothed and straightened the quilt, thinking about Goldilocks trespassing at the three bears' house.

The table was littered: bones, small tools, artist's brushes and pens, a coffee cup with a drowned cigarette stub, more butts nesting in an upturned turtle shell, some bright foil paper, an oily rag. Jazz flipped through a tablet of drawings of fangs and fishbones.

"He must be taking a summer course at the community college," I said, surprised. "He talked about that back in the spring, but I didn't believe it."

"Look at these," Jazz said. "They're good. How can anybody do that?" he said in amazement.

We studied the drawings. In the careful, exact lines I saw faint glimpses of my young child, and his splashy crayon pictures of monsters taped to the kitchen wall. Seeing his efforts suddenly mature was like running into a person I recognized but couldn't place. Most of the pictures were closeups of bones, but some were sketches of fish and birds. I liked those better. They had life to them. Eagerly, I raced through two dozen versions of a catfish. The fish was long and slim, like a torpedo. Its whiskers curved menacingly, and its body was accurately mottled. It even looked slippery. I stared at the catfish, almost as if I expected it to speak.

I jerked a blank sheet of paper from the tablet of drawings and worked on a note:

Dear Don,
It's 10:30 P.M. Friday and I came out here with a friend to see if you were home. We just dropped by to say hello. Please let me know how you are. Nothing's wrong. I've got some good news. And I'd love to see you.
Love,
Mom

"It doesn't sound demanding, does it?" I asked as Jazz read it.

"No, not at all."

"It almost sounds like one of those messages on an answering machine—stilted and phony."

Jazz held me as if he thought I might cry. I wasn't crying. He held my shoulders till he was sure I'd got the tears back in and then we left. I couldn't say why I wasn't crying. But nothing bad had happened. There wasn't anything tragic going on. My daughter was having a baby—that was the good news. My son had drawn some fishbones—drawings that were as fine as lace.

"Me and my bright ideas," Jazz said apologetically.

"It's O.K., Jazz. I'll track Don down some other time."

As we pulled out, Jazz said, "The wilderness makes me want to go out in it. I've got an idea. Tomorrow let's go for a long hike on one of those trails up in Shawnee National Forest. We can take backpacks and everything. Let's explore caves! Let's look for bears and stuff!"

I laughed. "You could be Daniel Boone and I could be Rebecca."

"I don't think Rebecca went for hikes. You'll have to be some Indian maiden Daniel picked up."

"Did Daniel Boone really do that sort of thing?" I said, pretending to be scandalized.

"He was a true explorer, wasn't he?" Jazz said, hitting the brights just as a deer seemed to drift across the road.

Jazz thought he was trying to cheer me up, but I was already so full of joy I couldn't even manage to tell him. I let him go on. He was sexiest when he worked at cheering me up.

IT was late, and I wound up at Jazz's place, a sprawling apartment with a speaker system wired into every room. His dog, Butch, met us at the door. While Jazz took Butch out for a midnight stroll, I snooped around. I found a beer in the refrigerator. I had trouble with the top and beer spewed all over Jazz's dinette. When he returned, I started teasing him about all the women's underwear he owned.

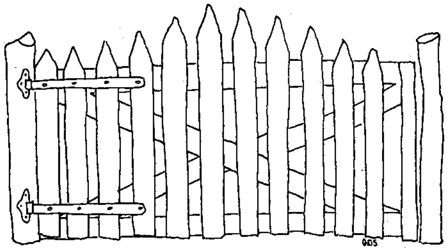
"Put some of it on," I urged.

"Are you nuts?"

"Just put it on, for me. I won't tell. Just for fun."

I kept teasing him, and he gave in. We couldn't find any garments that would fit. We hooked two bras together and rigged up a halter. With his lime-green bikini briefs—his own—he looked great, like a guy in a sex magazine. It's surprising what men really wear underneath. I searched for some music to play on Jazz's fancy sound system. I looked for the Everly Brothers but couldn't find them, so I put on a George Winston CD. To be nice, I never said a word about Jazz's taste in music. Exhilarated, I sailed from room to room, following the sound, imagining it was "Let It Be Me," instead. I suddenly felt an overwhelming longing to see Jim Ed again. I wanted to tell him about Don going to school, drawing pictures, making contact with the world again. I wanted to see the traces of Don's face in his. I wanted the two of us to go out to Arizona and see Laura and the baby when it came. We could make a family photo—Jim Ed and me and Laura, with the baby. The baby's father didn't enter into the vision.

It occurred to me that it takes so long to know another person. No wonder you can run through several, like trying on clothes that don't fit. There are so many to choose from, after all, but when I married Jim Ed it was like an impulse buy, buying the first thing you see. And yet I've learned to trust my intuition on that. Jim Ed was the right one all along, I thought recklessly. And I wasn't ever nice to Jim Ed. I was too young then to put myself in another person's place. Call it ignorance of the imagination. Back then I had looked down on him for being country, for eating with his arms anchored on the table and for wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. I'd get mad at him for just being himself at times when I thought he should act civilized. Now I've learned you can't change men, and sometimes those airs I'd looked for turn out to be so phony. Guys like Jim Ed always seemed to just be themselves, regardless of the situation. That's why I still loved him, I decided, as I realized I was staring at Jazz's reflection in the mirror—the lime green against the shimmering gold of his skin and the blips of the track lighting above.



Jazz followed me into the bedroom, where we worked at getting rid of our French togs. I was aware that Jazz was talking, aware that he was aware that I might not be listening closely. It was like hearing a story at my little neighborhood talk show. He was saying, "In France, there's this street, Rue du Bac. They call streets *rues*. The last time I left Monique and the two kids, it was on that street, a crowded shopping street. The people over there are all pretty small compared to us, and they have this blue-black hair and deep dark eyes and real light skin, like a hen's egg. I waved goodbye and the three of them just blended right into that crowd and disappeared. That's where they belong, and so I'm here. I guess you might say I just couldn't *parlez-vous*."

"Take me to France, Jazz. We could have a great time."

"Sure, babe. In the morning." Jazz turned toward me and smoothed the cover over my shoulders.

"I love you," Jazz said.

When I woke up at daylight, Jazz was still holding me, curled around me like a mother protecting her baby. The music was still playing, on infinite repeat.

—Bobbie Ann Mason

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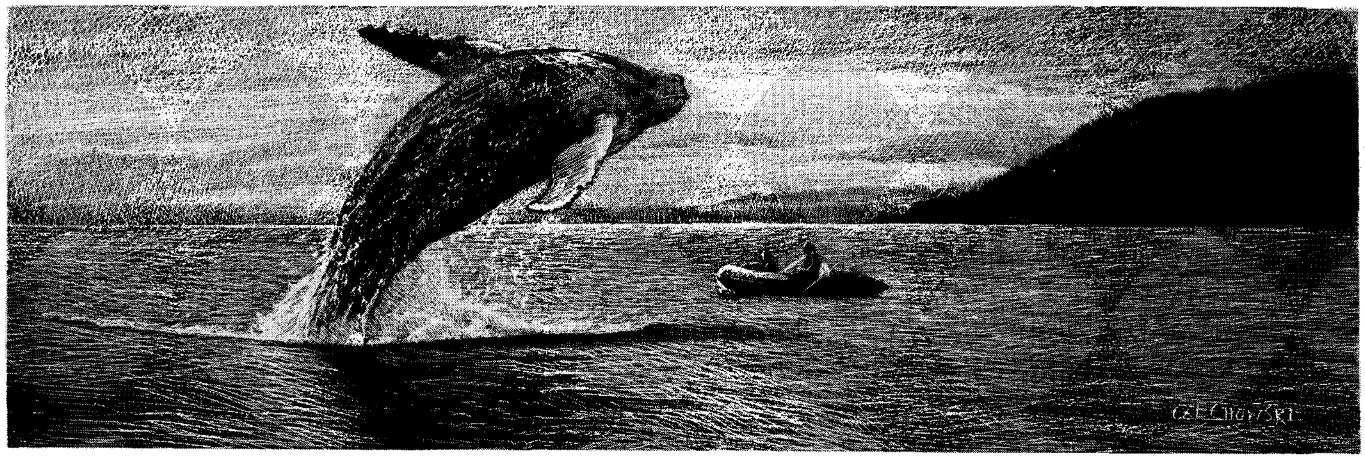
ANTICLIMAX DEPARTMENT

[*From a letter sent out by a San Diego real-estate broker*]

Well here we are entering a new decade and quite a new world as well. Our planet has been undergoing quite a change. Demands for freedom becoming reality in many different countries. Global economy becoming more intertwined everyday. Peace between the super powers replacing the cold war. And through all these changes one thing remains a constant; *Southern California Real Estate!*

A REPORTER AT LARGE

WHALES



Roger Payne is not hard for me to spot at the airport on Maui; he had warned me that he looked like a war casualty. Below his left eye is a half-moon bruise; a small piece of gouged forehead has been pushed back in place; and an angry cut above his mouth is just starting to heal. One evening earlier in the week, he had been strolling across a lawn with his hands tucked in his pockets, regarding the beauty of the Hawaiian night sky, had forgotten about a low rock fence, and had fallen squarely on his face before he could get his hands out of his pockets to break the fall. His glasses had fallen, too, and cracked at the nose bridge. Repaired with Krazy Glue, they now sit at odd angles on his face, one lens tilted farther forward than the other, and the frame slightly askew. So it is an unlikely apparition, holding a red-and-yellow lei of Plumeria blossoms, that greets me in the polyglot hubbub of the airport. But the apparition is someone I have waited a dozen years to meet—ever since a night in the mid-seventies when, at Cornell University's Bailey Hall, I attended a lecture he gave on the songs of humpback whales, which he concluded with a duet for cello and whale song. He was clearly an expert and talented cellist, but it was the whale songs—great booming ragas of creaking and moaning and seat-shaking bass—that captivated everyone with their beauty and mystery.

Leaving the terminal, we walk out into the April sunlight, climb into a car, and head for the town of Kihei, and a lavish oceanside house owned by Ani and Jerry Moss, two whale enthusiasts. Over the years, Roger has travelled the world recording and analyzing the songs of humpback whales and studying the habits of other whales. Roger's definition of a whale (derived from Melville) is "a mammal in the sea that has a horizontal tail and spouts," so it includes both the large animals we usually think of as whales and the small whales we term interchangeably "dolphins" and "porpoises." Whales have the largest brains on earth, and those brains are every bit as complex as our own. Whales also have a culture, and they seem to have language. They sing songs that obey rules of the sort one finds in classical music. What does a creature with the largest brain on earth use it for? Why does a whale sing? What do the songs mean? Almost everything about whales is a tantalizing mystery. Although I have never met Roger Payne before, I have met some of those fascinations of his, and consider them old friends.

Turning onto a shore road, we come to the Mosses' house, set among trumpet flowers and bougainvillea, and sprawling on a promontory above the sea which has its own small sandy beach and ragged shoreline. Jerry Moss, who is one of the founders of A & M Records, has just left for Los Angeles, but Ani is still there, and so is her sister Katy. Ani is a tall, thin, fair-haired woman of unidentifiable age who once was a Vogue model (and looks the part) and now is deeply involved in efforts to stop the killing of dolphins. Her sister, also a thin, pretty blonde, is an accountant from Salt Lake City. The plan is for Roger and me to rent a Zodiac—an inflatable boat—and go find some of the singers so that Roger can tape them. Each day, we rise at 5 A.M., phone the National Weather Service's general- and marine-forecast recordings, and even the pilots' Flight Service Station, and then scan the ocean through binoculars and see whitecaps too treacherous to risk. A trough has settled over the islands, bringing steady rain and high winds; the seas are eighteen feet, and the system is unyielding. So, since we are housebound, Roger works on completing the installation of a receiver for signals from an offshore buoy, which broadcasts sound from an attached hydrophone: to an antenna hitched outside the house he connects the receiver in the living room, which will allow the Mosses to record whale songs for him and also to tune in whenever they're in the mood for a concert.

Roger is a tall, slender man with sturdy shoulders, enormous hands, a long stride, and a slightly rocking gait, probably the result of a knee operation he had last year. He has slate-gray hair, parted on the left and thinning a little on top, which looks slightly windblown even when freshly combed; a large forehead, on which four evenly spaced lines form when he's concentrating; hazel eyes, which look brown more often than green; a medium complexion; and a small, neat nose. Sometimes, in repose, his face looks undisturbable and fifty-something, but when he is animated it can become that of a rompy, mischievous twenty-year-old. He spends many months outdoors, and has the kind of front-only tan that is acquired accidentally. He slips into a Brooklyn accent from time to time in conversation, just to emphasize the silliness of something or other, but his normal speaking voice is unusually resonant and poised, like a singer's, and, indeed, he does sing madrigals as well as play the cello. His clothes look freshly laundered and ironed, but a pair of gray-green pants has a small constellation of holes along one leg, and both pockets of a blue shirt are frayed. His origins would be hard to pin down from his speech. He uses a cosmopolitan vernacular that shifts easily among classes and cultures, and his vocabulary is peppered with scientific jargon, sixties lingo, literary allusions, musical terms, poetic images, casual cursing, and the verbal niceties needed for courtesy or protocol. A word like "groovy" or "bozo" mixes naturally with the down-home phrase "right quick," a British-sitcom exclamation such as "Lord love a duck!," a heartfelt "Bless you" by way of thanks, and an unexpected leave-taking like "Let's blow this Popsicle stand." In situations that require the delicate handling of people, he glides into a tone of casual high regard that is intense, warm, and as smooth as flowing lava. His father was an electrical engineer at Bell Labs in New York City and was every bit as absent-minded as Roger freely confesses to being. His mother was a violinist and violist, beside whom he often sat when they played string quartets with friends; before she was married, she taught at the Mannes Music School.

Roger, who is the director of the Long-Term Research Institute, in Lincoln, Massachusetts (an affiliate of the World Wildlife Fund), has been trying to acquire a boat equipped with directional sonar, but the boat has proved to need expensive and unexpected repairs. Now a smaller but more workable boat may soon become available. This new boat, a forty-six-footer, was built in Sri Lanka, and has directional sonar, a directional hydrophone, ten halogen lamps built into the hull to illuminate the ocean, and other desirable fittings. Roger is also trying to coördinate trips to Japan and the Galápagos, and Hawaii and Alaska, and to review whale research from all over the world. The International Whaling Commission declared a moratorium on commercial whaling in 1982, ten years after the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment had called for one. But the I.W.C. moratorium did not take effect until 1986, and a loophole was left: countries may "kill, take and treat whales for purposes of scientific research." Japan has been especially unscrupulous in taking advantage of the loophole, and Norway is another offender. Much of his time, therefore, is spent trying to save endangered whales. His days brim with commotion. It must feel like living in the middle of a Charles Ives symphony. Most of his research efforts these days focus on the humpback whale's songs and the family life of the right whale, but all whales fascinate him: scientists still know so little about them, and nonscientists even less.

If you ask most people to draw a whale, they will probably draw a sperm whale, the bulbous-headed whale made famous in "Moby-Dick"—a book that is as much a treatise on whales as it is a novel. But whales come in many shapes, sizes, and colors. There are two basic groups: the toothed whales (Odontoceti, from the Latin for "tooth" and "whale") and the baleen whales (Mysticeti, from the Latinized-Greek word for "whale"). Toothed whales include the sperm whale, the dolphin, and the orca, or killer whale, and have a single external blowhole, which in the course of evolution has migrated to the top of the head. They echolocate, using sonar to scan their world, find their prey, and map their underwater landscape. And, of course, they have teeth, which they use to hold on to such prey as fish, squid, and shrimp. (Many whales swallow their prey whole, so the teeth are probably for grasping rather than for chewing.) Baleen whales don't have teeth but, instead, hundreds of tightly packed,

SUNDAY SKATERS

These days,
the sky composes promises
and rips them to pieces. White
as a sheet, this morning's cloud
cover crumples now and again, then snaps
back white when a gust shakes it out. Out
for the usual stroll,

I stop
to look at March in its muddles:
in a snowbank (black
boulders of old ice new-
mottled with powder), puddles
that must be from yesterday's
slanting rain and hail,

which fell
as if from one combined
salt-and-pepper shaker. I wind
as the wind does, chased downhill,
past the soaked, concrete blocks
of apartments and the dented heaps
of corrugated-iron houses

left out
in the rain for years and years,
the olive-green of their raised
surfaces sprayed with rust
in vertical bands. Venetian blinds—
more metal, pulled to metal sills, but
going against the grain—

mix up
the texture, as does, still better, this
one lace-curtained window fringed
with icicles.
Since they may melt in an hour,
on a day when everything's changed
so often, one pauses for that pristine

tension
of winter held in suspension. Just
then, at the bottom of the street,
I see the skaters:
the luck of it
on a Sunday! The chances thin
as the ice they coast on—

to find
the snow wind-dusted off,
and an hour both cold and warm enough
overlapping leisure.
From here, the disk of the pond

• •

looks like one of those children's games
designed for the palm,

whose goal
is all at once to sink each silver
ball into a hole.
What each of them is slipping
into, though, is another color:
approached, they glide by in mint and mauve
and lilac, turquoise, rose, down

parkas
in shiny nylon glimpsed
for an instant. Like a clock
with too many hands, gone haywire,
the pond's a rink of hockey sticks: tock-
tick-tick as the puck
takes a shortcut from four to six

to nine.
Look at that girl in the long braid, trailed
by her mother, a close-cropped beauty
who takes on a heart-speeding
force as they spin hand in
hand, and a teen-ager's sheen;
and catch that baby buggy,

pushed off
freely as a swing down the ice . . .

Stock-still at the clock's center,
the pin that everything hinges on:
the wide, fur-circled face
of a small boy who feels his place
in the larger frame.

It's all
about time, about time! Above us,
a frosty layer of cloud takes the weight
of the sun's one warming foot,
bright as a yellow boot. Although,
as yet, nothing flies but the snow's
negative (flurries

of crows
appearing from nowhere), rather
than wait for the other shoe
to drop—that shower
of rain, or sleet, or something, sure
to come—I rush into a coffee shop,
and close the door.

And close
my eyes, in time, when a cup
of muddy, quivering liquid releases
erasing clouds of steam, calling up
in the sudden dark the skater's dizzy
scissoring and seesawing, scoring
lines over, and over again.

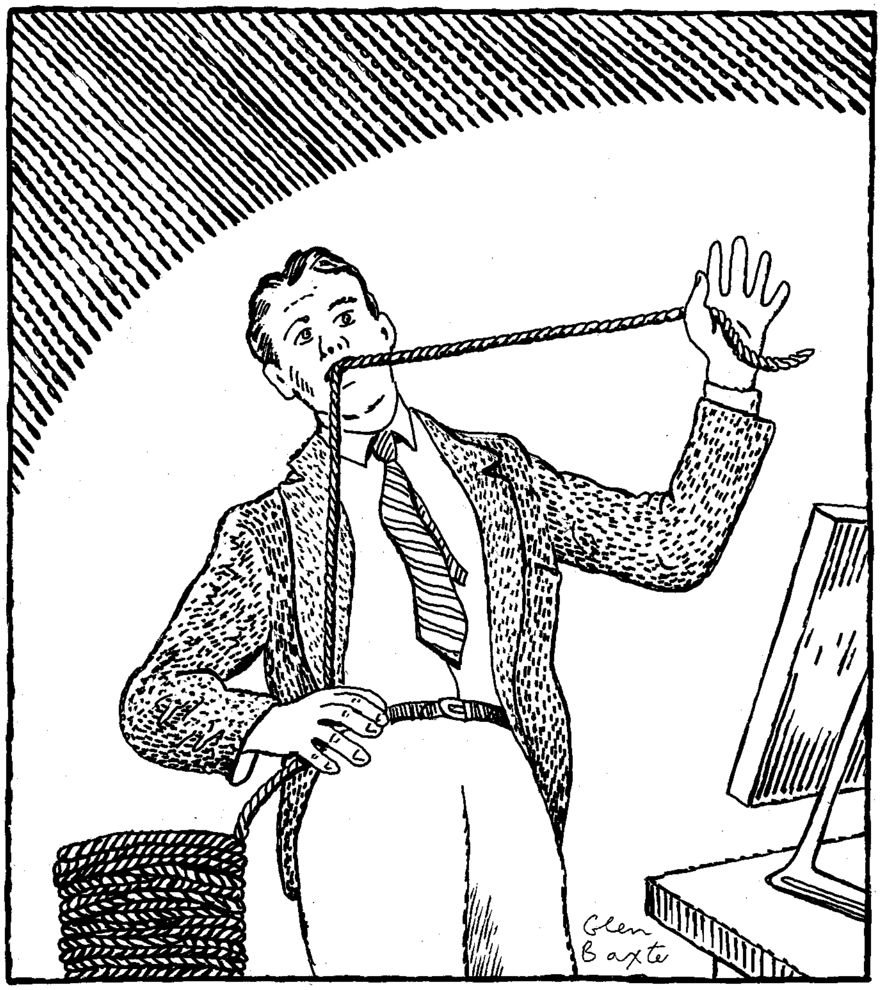
—Mary Jo Salter

• •

springy baleen plates (made of keratin, the same substance as human fingernails), which grow down from the upper gums. Baleen whales have paired blowholes—nostrils, in fact—which are also on the top of the head. Some baleen species graze peacefully as they move through the water, rolling slowly along with their mouths yawning open. Because the baleen has a smooth outside edge and a bristly inside edge, water can flow freely out of the whale's mouth, but krill, plankton, and small schooling fish get caged inside. Other species have pleats on the throat, so that they can stretch their mouths open even wider, like valises, and when they're feeding they roll on one side, take in a huge amount of water, expand their pleated throats, and then press the water out, leaving their meal behind.

Those two large groups, Odontoceti and Mysticeti, include seventy-seven species of whales and dolphins—all that inhabit the earth. In a rather macabre twist, one of those species, the right whale, a Mysticete, gets its name because it was "the right whale to kill." New whalers, ignorant about whale species, would look out, see a whale, and ask if that was the right whale, and in time the name stuck. When right whales are killed, instead of sinking, as most dead whales do, they float; they don't struggle much in battle, either, and to the whalers of past centuries their baleen was extremely valuable. Now the right whale is one of the rarest whale species, and it has a special distinction in the history of human affairs. Every species of animal that we have brought to extinction has occupied a limited area—an island, an archipelago, a continent. We have never in our tenure on earth brought to extinction a truly cosmopolitan species—one with a worldwide distribution. "The closest we've ever come is with the right whale," Roger explains over dinner. "And we came so vanishingly close. It would have represented a new benchmark, a new low—the lowest, the most careless, the most outrageous thing that humanity had yet done to the planet. But the fact that our generation is making the effort to prevent that extinction is evidence that we're waking up at last. In that sense, the right whale is an important bellwether of the human condition."

Another species of Mysticeti, the gray whale, became extinct in the North Atlantic by the end of the seventeen-hundreds, at the hands of Basque whalers, the founders of seagoing whaling in the West. It is almost certain that those whalers, as well as the Vikings, came to America before Columbus. (Roger says that what Columbus really discovered was "public relations.") When the gray whale was formally "discovered" again, in the nineteenth century, in the North Pacific, it was called the "devilfish." Captain Charles Scammon, a naturalist, came across its major breeding areas, in the lagoons of Baja California, and hunted it furiously there; it injured several men and smashed all his boats in very short order. This species is now noted for what is called "the friendly-whale phenomenon." In 1977, a single gray whale in San Ignacio Lagoon, near Scammon's Lagoon, off Baja California, became "chronically friendly," as Roger puts it, and allowed itself to be patted by passengers of all the whale-watching boats that could find it. During the next several seasons, the number of friendly whales soared, until anyone who wanted to pet a whale could do so. Though no one is keeping count, last winter there were probably hundreds of gray whales approaching boats there for cosseting and stroking. Not only does it seem to be part of their whale culture but it's something they've learned from each other. In the lagoons where gray whales assemble in large numbers in the wintertime, it can grow terribly windy. Tourists in a whale-watching boat near a gray whale may find the wind blowing the boat along the surface. The whale is not borne along by the wind, and it will go through contortions to stay with the boat, presenting its belly to be scratched and rubbed. Originally, the friendly gray whales drew tourists, but now it is the other way around: the presence of the tourists



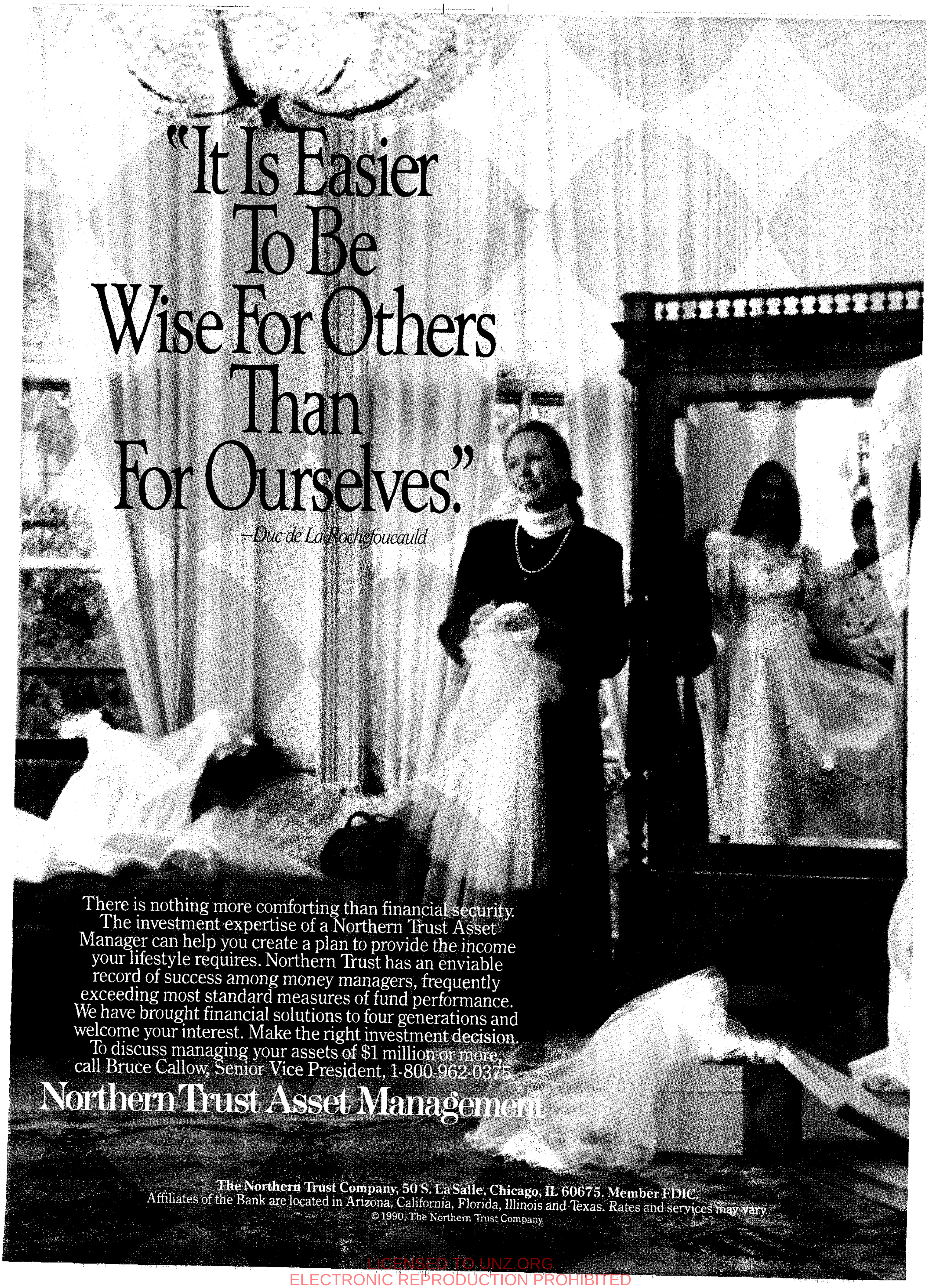
ROBINSON WAS A FIRM BELIEVER IN A THOROUGH FLOSSING PROGRAM.

draws the whales. The whales go actively searching for boats, rush after them, and will even bump into a boat, and then quickly roll over like puppies, belly up, in order to be patted and rubbed and scratched. To Roger, these gray whales are the classic example of how wrong our conceptions of whales have been: "Imagine, the gray whale was the devilfish, the malicious animal that had the gall to kill people who were attempting at that very moment to reach its heart or lungs with a spear so that it would bleed to death internally. Not a very strong sign of aggression, I should say. How could we have been so wrong as to name this animal the devilfish when it turns out to be so friendly?"

One genus of whales, *Balaenoptera*, includes five closely related species, of which the minke is the smallest baleen whale, and the blue is the largest animal ever to exist on earth. It can be more than a hundred feet long. Its tongue weighs as much as an elephant. To execute the simple maneuver of putting its head down—that is, going from horizontal to vertical in the water—it has first to be in a hundred feet of water, of course, and then, when it does get its head all the way down, or when it stands up on its tail, it has a difference in pressure from the tip of its nose to the tip of its tail of three atmospheres. The heart of a blue whale weighs several tons, and on a factory ship it often took six brawny men to drag the heart out with flensing hooks. The aorta leading from that heart is large enough for a child to crawl through, and the major blood vessels look about the size of a sewer pipe; a salmon could comfortably swim down them. The blue whale makes loud, low-frequency sounds that, Roger and a colleague have postulated, can travel enormous distances. The ocean transmits sound in strange and unlikely ways. There's a layer of water, known as the "deep sound channel," in which sound waves can be trapped and spread great distances because they bend back into the channel over and over, without reflecting from the ocean's surface and bed, and so losing hardly any energy. Under those circumstances, whale sound can travel as much as five hundred miles before blending into background noise. These days, the oceans are polluted by human sounds, but in the tens of millions of years before the advent of ships (during which about 99.9 per cent of the evolution of blue whales took place) whale sounds might have travelled out to distances of several thousand miles, so that any two whales could have sat on opposite sides of the same ocean and been in contact with each other. Those conversations wouldn't have needed to be complex—only simple exchanges of information about, for example, where food could be found. If a whale had been hungry, it might have remained quiet; if it had been well fed, it might have spoken. Then all a hungry whale would have needed to do was swim in the direction of the loudest sound. If a whale had had too much to eat, it would have been to its advantage to share excess food with its kin; next year, its kin might have returned the favor.

Finally, there is the humpback whale. It has long, paddlelike white flippers and a huge tail with markings as distinctive as fingerprints, but its most arresting feature is that it sings—sings complicated, beautiful songs. A bird will sing a song, grow quiet, and then perhaps sing its song again, but a humpback will sing a long, complex, sustained song and go back and start again without any break, singing continuously. When it is diving, it flexes its back sharply, and appears to have a hump on its back—hence the name. It is acrobatic when it breaches. Sometimes it will roll onto one side and wave a long flipper out of the water. At other times, it will stick its head out of the water, in a "spy hop." One way that humpbacks feed is to swim in a tight circle, spinning a net of bubbles around a school of krill or fish. These creatures apparently become alarmed by the bubbles and clump together, whereupon the humpbacks rise up within the circle, mouths open, and gobble them up.

Whales are mammals: they breathe



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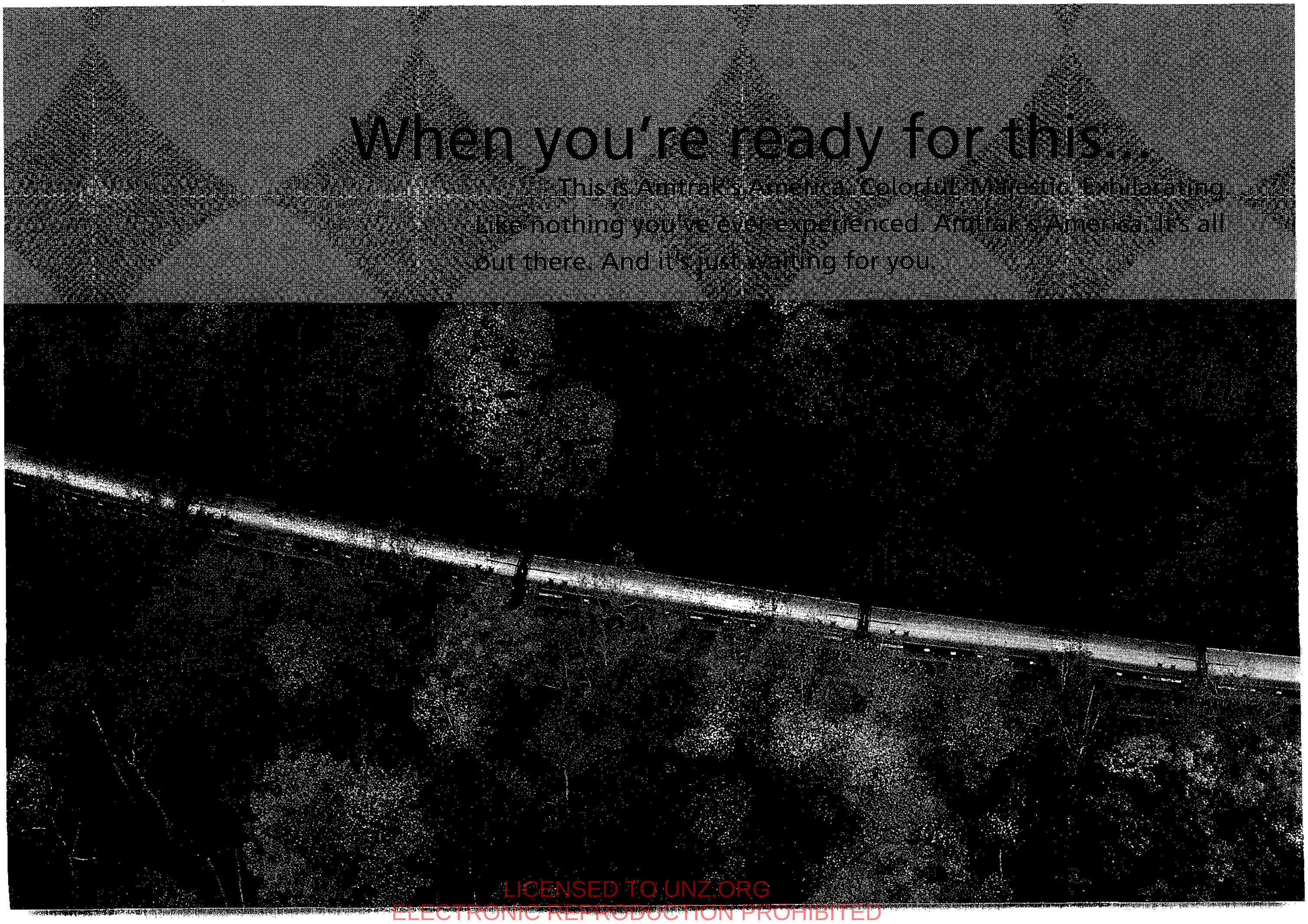
air, bear live young, nurse them with milk, and have hair—well, anyway, a few whiskers. And though we picture whales wobbling with blubber to keep them warm, a whale's real problem is staying cool. A whale is like a house with a too large furnace and too few radiators. Should whales overexercise in warm equatorial waters, they might conceivably die of overheating. When a whale is killed in the Antarctic, it is eviscerated with a long, sharp flensing knife. The entire length of the whale's body cavity is opened up, so that the icy water can wash it thoroughly. Then the body is tied tail first to the bow of the catcher boat and dragged back to the factory ship, where it will be hauled aboard and cut up. If the whale is left in the water too long, even though it is lying in icy water its bones will be charred by the heat of its internal decay. When that happens, it's referred to as a "burnt whale." Imagine an animal generating so much heat that, even though it's lying under icy water with its belly cut wide open, its bones cook.

Sperm whales, most of which live very close to the equator, cool off by diving to unfathomable depths. Plunging down to where the water temperature is close to freezing, they feed on squid or large fish, sometimes swallowing sharks whole. In that strange realm of pressure and darkness, a sperm whale swims like a spaceship through slowly moving galaxies of luminescent fish—a world hard for us to imagine. Small wonder that whales seem magical. Until recently, we could scarcely enter their world even long enough to see them completely. And scientists still aren't able to travel with them sufficiently to learn of their wanderings and relationships. Almost everything we know about whales we have had to learn from dead animals or from the occasional stranding of confused or ill ones. Only in rare, privileged moments do we join their world, and then only briefly and shallowly, to watch through the murk or to eavesdrop.

As Roger sprawls on the rug, adjusting the receiver, whale songs fill the Mosses' house with otherworldly music, produced by singers who have been his often invisible companions for nearly thirty years. Roger uses a photographic "fluke record" enabling him to identify many individual humpback whales, and can also distinguish singers from different years by the phrasing of their songs. He has most often heard the songs without being able to see, or guess, who the singer might be. In that sense, the songs are like those of the troubadours, who wandered through the Middle Ages regaling people with songs anonymous but unforgettable.

Why do whales sing? One theory has it that humpback whales use their songs as other animals use their horns: the whale with the longest and most complex song wards off competing males. Another leading theory argues that the songs are more like peacocks' tails—the whale with the best song is the one most attractive to females. But that doesn't explain why whales revise their songs. I wonder if whales change their songs for the reasons human beings do—for sheer variety, or to include new myths or folk wisdom, or out of a kind of mental fidgeting, or to give the group a stronger sense of community, or simply as a form of play, or as a way for generations to set themselves apart, or for reasons as whimsical as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fashion, or to pass along new information about their changing environment. They live at such great distances from one another; maybe singing is their equivalent of sheepherders' whistling or yodelling across valleys with news or just to keep themselves from feeling so alone.

"Could they be changing their songs for the same reasons human beings do, in an intelligent way?" I ask Roger.

He glances at me over the top of his glasses, then returns to a delicate soldering job and says, "Maurice Ewing, who was the head of the Lamont-Doherty Geological Observatory, in Palisades, New York, and is one of those who really synthesized the details and facts that led to the theory of plate tectonics, spoke of what he called 'brutal facts.' A brutal fact is one that goes against your natural inclinations or beliefs, yet because it exists you're forced to pay attention to it and recognize that it's telling you something wholly unexpected and very powerful. Well, some brutal facts associated with whales make it very difficult to figure out what the songs are all about. Let me give you a few examples. The songs are incredibly complex. They change every year, and they're very beautiful. For us, they trigger many ideas and emotions—some people respond to whale songs by weeping. But another brutal fact is that they're monotonous. They repeat endlessly. It doesn't sound that way to a casual listener, but if you sit for an entire season listening to whale songs you can get roundly sick of some of the variations you're hearing. A song won't be completely different for several years, so you must keep in mind that, whatever it means, its message is bound to be very monotonous."

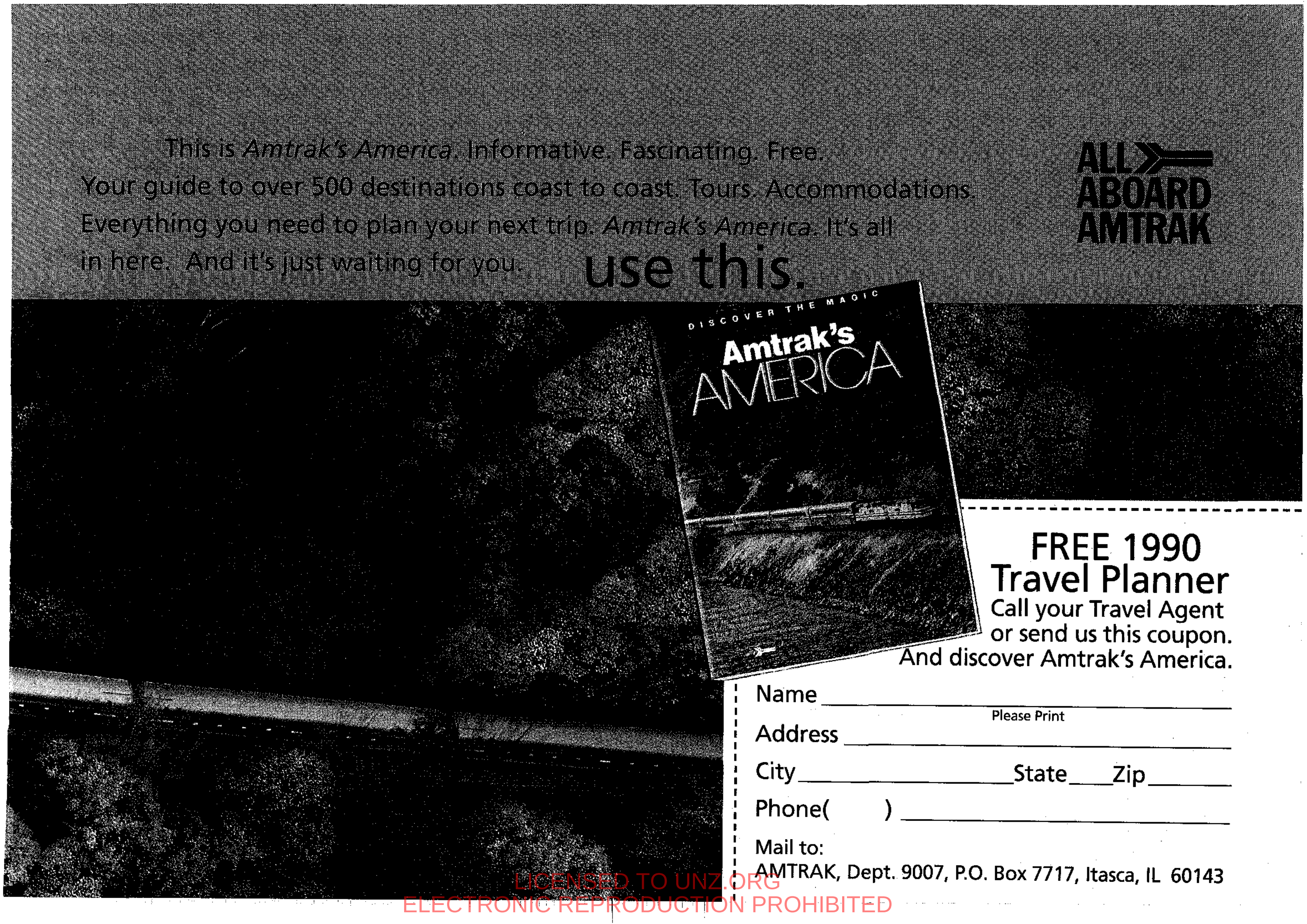
A long, trilling bass fills the house with haunting sounds. Creaking doors turn into ricocheting moans. How can this plunging, stuttering, and swooning be monotonous? To a trained ear, familiar phrases reveal themselves as predictably as themes in a well-known piece of music. I think of the variety within an Indian raga or a Bach fugue, which to some ears also sounds monotonous.

"Do you think the monotony of the songs makes them less aesthetically pleasing to the whales?" I ask.

"Oh, no. Not at all. What could be more monotonous than a teen-ager's playing the latest heavy-metal tape three hundred times in a row, until it's worn out or demagnetized? No, if you tune in as a regular listener to pop music you'll hear the Top Ten songs played most of the day on many stations. That doesn't affect aesthetics. What I'd like to know is: What's the evolutionary advantage of this monotony? Of course, it's just as hard to say why people sing." He unfolds his long legs slowly, stands up, and ambles over to the electrical closet to test another receiver. He twiddles a knob on a control panel, cocks an ear, listens intently, then returns to the spill of wires, boxes, and screws on the rug.

"Suppose human beings evolved two forms of communication," I say. "One that is direct emotional communication—music—and one that's analytical and verbal, which we call language."

"Now you're exactly on to what I'm suggesting," he says. "I like that idea. It would be wonderful to be able to look at someone and make those noises that are deeply evocative of a particular emotion and thus lock the other person



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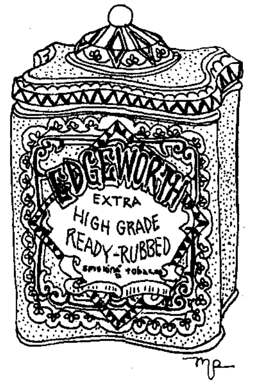
to the emotion you're feeling. And we do do that to some extent. If we see someone weeping, our impulse is to weep with him. Or if we see someone yawning, we may yawn as well. Such things help to synchronize the behavior of a group. I'm willing to think of people as having a form of communication that is directly evocative of emotions. But then there's that monotony of the whale songs. It would be almost as if you sat each day and told the story of some terrible trauma, or wonderful love, or deep disgrace, over and over and over again, while everyone around you was telling the same story."

"Birds and other mammals get along perfectly well with songs that don't change all the time," I say. "Why is it so important to whales to change their songs?"

"I could make up a sort of half-baked answer. I could say, for instance, that if one male comes up with a song that's attractive to more females the other males in the area will soon recognize that Joe is doing a lot better than they are, and change their tune to copy Joe, so then Joe loses his advantage. And the others, or Joe, would then try different versions that might give them an advantage over the competition, even if just a momentary one."

"So we don't know why they sing. But it's only the males that sing, right?" I picture an oceanful of cetacean Mario Lanzas.

Roger smiles. "There's some confusion over that. We have thirty-five singers of known sex, and they are all males except one. An adult and a calf were seen by a highly reliable observer, Graeme Ellis. Singing was coming from the adult. Graeme dived to observe them, and, as he watched, the calf went down and appeared to nurse, and the adult released what seemed to be a puff of milk into the water. A puff of milk should be a pretty good indicator of sex. But the trouble is that even though Graeme is a totally experienced observer, and I completely accept his interpretation of what he saw at face value, I am an experienced observer, too, and I've been so badly fooled so many times by what whales were doing around me that I know how badly anyone can be fooled. For example, on a cliff in Argentina where you can sit and look directly down through the water, I saw a female and a calf underwater with no other whale around for as far as I could see, and suddenly a male was there, underwater, right next to them. He messed around with them for five or ten minutes, and then disappeared without blowing. To an observer on the beach or in a boat (as Graeme was for most of this time), he would have been invisible—no one would have seen him approach or leave. The only reason I knew he was there is that I happened to have a high and favorable viewpoint. I think it's possible that there was a male down underneath the female and calf Graeme saw. But Graeme says that as the female returned to the surface the sound diminished in intensity, but as the calf approached the surface the sound level remained about the same. That is an extremely important observation, because if you are listening with a shallow hydrophone to a whale singing, at the moment the whale comes to the surface most of the energy from the singing is refracted downward by the warmer water near the surface and doesn't get to your hydrophone. The result is that when the whale is right at the surface it sounds very feeble, and then as it dives the sound can travel directly to your hydrophone without being refracted away from it, and the sound becomes louder. I'm still not sure that there wasn't a male singer that was out of sight down below, or that the female didn't interpose her body between Graeme and a singing calf each time she happened to come to the surface. On the other hand, he may be absolutely right—maybe females do sing."



No one has any idea how humpback whales make their sounds. Joking about how little we know, William Schevill, a distinguished elder statesman of whale biology, once said, "Perhaps they make their sounds by rubbing their vestigial hind limbs together." For all we know, they play their ribs like a concertina and their baleen like a pocket comb.

"Don't they have a larynx or a windpipe?" I ask.

"It used to be thought that whales didn't even have vocal cords, but now we know that certain Odontoceti have something very much like them."

"How about air pockets?"

"They have every kind you can name. They have an area of their windpipe which might be in some way involved. They have a plumbing system so fancy that it could support any theory you like about how they generate sounds, but, at present, any other theory would do, too. We just don't know where their sounds are coming from. The harmonic series associated with the sounds are certainly the kinds that would be made by a system based on air—closed pipes filled with air."

For a moment, the creaking and moaning give way to popping sounds and clarinet notes. "How about other passageways working like whistles or flutes?" I suggest. "The Aztecs had a large variety of whistles and flutes that could make many different sounds, depending on the air chambers or the chambers holding water and other fluids."

"Whistles, yes, but not flutes, because a flute is an open-ended pipe. But the whales could be using any number of different sound-producing mechanisms, and some of their sounds are clearly just a train of pulses produced so rapidly that you and I perceive it as a tone." Sweeping aside a row of invisible possibilities with one hand, he says, "One thing I can tell you is that when a whale sings no air is released."

"What a mystery!"

"It's one of the more intriguing little mysteries of our time."

Roger walks outside to adjust the antenna he has put up near a huge chunk of fused crystals, embraced by ferns, that sits on a block of lava on the grassy promontory just beyond the back porch. Ani says that she set a crystal down on the beach, out of respect for the wild dolphins, and it drew them. Two white rope hammocks hang between palm trees, and flowery terraces lead to an open-air shower made of lava and other rocks. Thick white clouds churn like fresh smoke above the horizon. One singer comes on strong, like a yowling tomcat, while we are fixing dinner. Ani is wearing a new black sweatshirt with good drawings of a humpback mother and calf. Everywhere you look in the Mosses' house, primitive sculptures mix with

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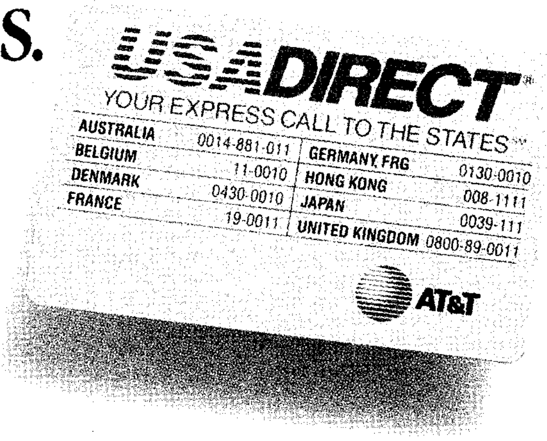
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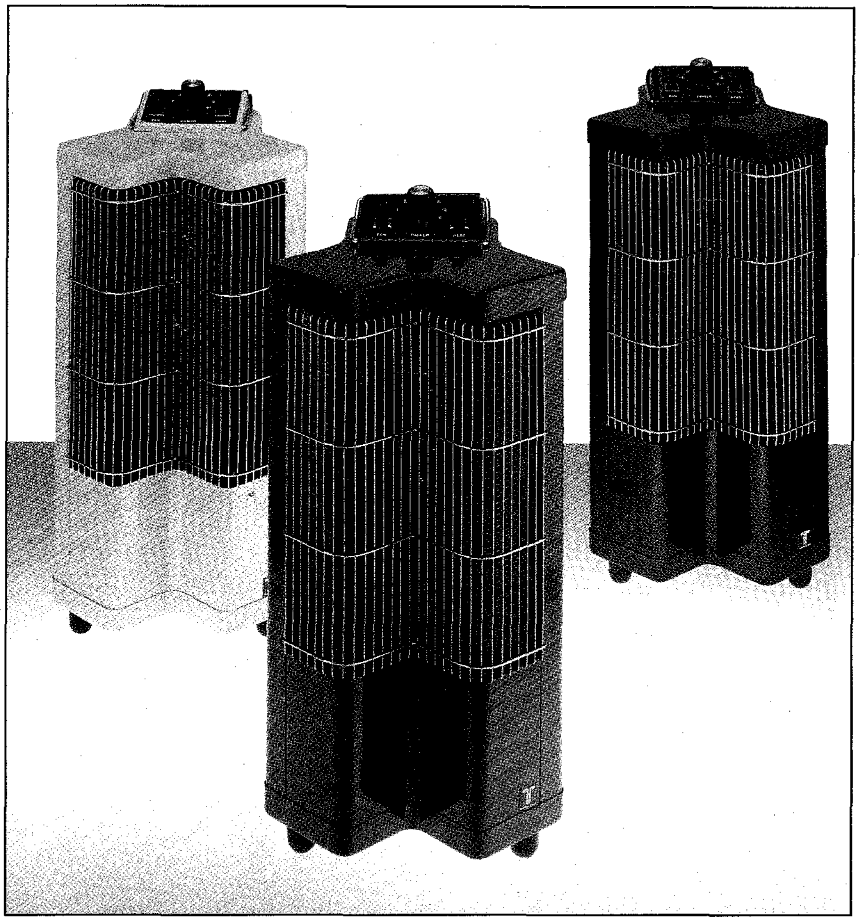
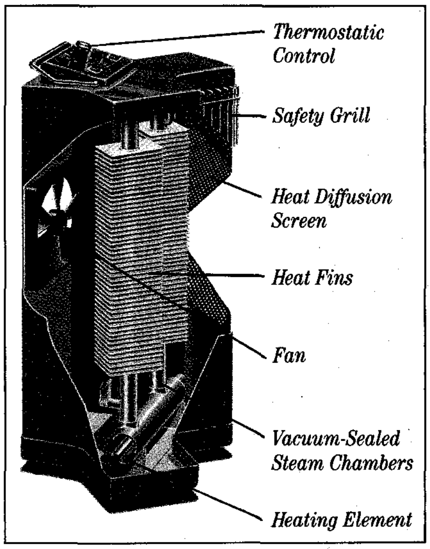
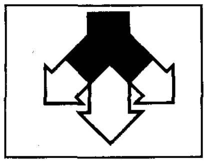


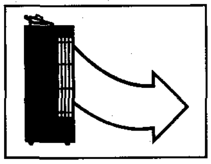
THE TECHNOLOGY: The story begins in the Arctic. A small Colorado company had an order from the U.S. Government to manufacture a vacuum insulated stainless steel canteen that would stand up to hard use and keep liquids from freezing in the torturous Arctic cold. It took the company a great deal of time to perfect the process of "pulling a vacuum" in a sealed metal system so that it stood up to hard use, yet could be manufactured economically. Now, after seven years of additional research and over twenty worldwide patents they have used that original technology to produce a room heating unit that leaps a generation beyond every other heater on the market. At the heart of the Heatech™ heater is the vacuum technology developed to preserve warmth in the Arctic. Here the vacuum is used to cause water to boil almost instantly at approximately 130°F instead of the usual 212°F. Water inside the sealed Heatech system turns to steam and rises in vertical tubes. There the heat is transferred to fins which in turn heat the cold room air that is then blown through a diffusion screen to bring you warmth where you need it.

THE PERFORMANCE: The system is super fast and effective. Comparison tests show the Heatech doing in 15 minutes what other heaters take up to an hour to do. Inside, as the heat transfer cools the steam, it condenses back into water droplets and the cycle starts again. The vacuum sealed system does not need replenishing and does not require service. The Heatech's unusual patented cabinet design provides greater air flow and more even heat distribution. While warm air from most other heaters simply rises wastefully to the ceiling, Heatech provides a multi-directional heat flow that warms your room more uniformly from the floor up.





Multi-directional heat flow



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THE SAFETY FACTOR: The 1500 watt Heatech also sets a new standard in safety. It is one of the few electric heaters on the market not required to carry the UL fire hazard warning sticker on the heater. Recent independent laboratory tests show Heatech's hottest surface temperature is up to 205° lower than other types of heaters tested - making it exceptionally safe for use around children or pets. To further protect against accidents, the Heatech has three separate safety devices — a tipover switch, thermal sensing switch and pressure relief valve.

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images of whales. There are whale sculptures, whale drawings, whale videos. Katy is wearing a silver ring on which two dolphins are entwined.

Roger takes down his antenna and finds a better spot for it, at the side of the house, near a tree. The antenna is long and splay-fingered—a line-of-sight antenna, directed toward the buoy, about three hundred yards offshore. In materials, the buoy is worth only about seven hundred dollars, but Roger is hoping that with it he can make an invaluable collection of a week's continuous recordings. When he returns, taking care to close the screen door snugly (there are poisonous centipedes that ripple through the grass and can bite), we sit down to eat, serenaded by a concert that is at once familiar and eerie.

ONE morning, though the seas are galloping and high, we stand on the promontory in back of the house, binoculars pressed to our eyes, searching the horizon for whales. Actually, all we're looking for is a "blow," the misty spout that a whale leaves when it surfaces to breathe. The blow is not the only sighting cue we could use, though. Whale watchers have learned to look for a rolling animal, and for a whitecap splash of flukes or flippers. A sperm whale throws its flukes very high in the air, and their trailing edge has a big notch on it; humpbacks have multicolored flukes; a right whale has broad, lip-shaped flukes with a shallow notch. Whale scientists look for changing color under the water—say, the pale blue of humpback flukes near the surface. They look for "footprints" in the water—rings that look like slick footsteps, caused by animals swimming just below the surface. They look for a dorsal fin. The killer whale has a very tall, erect dorsal fin, whereas the southern right whale has no dorsal fin at all. But the most common guide is the blow, because, though not always reliable, it varies enough among whales to be useful and can be seen from a great distance. The blue whale's blow is a thin column that can rise as much as a hundred feet and stay visible for thirty seconds in the dry Antarctic air. The sperm whale has a forward-canted, left-sided blow, easy to identify. Right whales and bowheads make a misty V-shaped blow from their twin blowholes.

"There's a whale!" Roger says, pointing to a wedge of ocean just off the southern end of Molokini, a crescent-shaped island across the bay from the Mosses' home. "It's moving north along the island."

In a moment, I see a low, bushy balloon of vapor, the signature of the humpback whale. Ancient mariners used to think that the exhalations of whales were poisonous—a caustic mixture of sulfur and brimstone, which could strip the flesh from any man who chanced too close. But scientists who have been drenched by the breath of healthy whales say that it feels like a delicate mist; some have reported a faint odor of musk.

The clouds have begun to swarm again, but this time we are going out, anyway. To keep ourselves dry and warm, we put on many layers of clothing over our swimsuits, and then green plastic trash bags with armholes and head holes cut in them. No one else is crazy enough to be at the marina, when the sky is like clotted milk and there's a blue veil of rain on the horizon. Roger steers the inflatable Zodiac out to where the waves are heaving, toward Molokini, where we know that at least one whale will be singing. And what a song it will be! The shape of the island creates lovely echoes when the whale and his listener are in just the right positions. The farther we get from shore, the higher the waves become—high enough so that Roger stops the engine suddenly to teach me how to re-start it if it should fail; he gives me the throttle and the rudder, making sure I can steer both straight and in circles. He's not planning on being washed over the side, but the wind can get right underneath a Zodiac and flip it, and the current can carry one some distance. Then we continue, at speed, with Roger steering. Over my shoulder I watch a pale-blue curtain of storm approach the north end of Maui. The winds have begun to pick up, the lunging waves have started to shake froth from their mouths like runaway horses, and after each crest we skid down into the bottom of the bowl. Roger cuts across the waves obliquely, angling smartly from one crest to another. Although I've been in Zodiacs in rough seas in the Antarctic and off South Georgia, in the Falklands, I have never been in one handled more expertly than this: we slide across the sides of tall muddy-blue waves and weave among convulsive valleys where rising and falling waves meet. Then water spumes over the bow, spumes a second time, and Roger turns sharply, at a ninety-degree angle, and heads straight for shore. There's no use going on: it would be unsafe. If we hug the coastline, the waters will be a little calmer. The suddenness of his decision to turn back surprises me, but then I realize that this small boat is one of the main tools of his trade, and he has learned its limits and eccentricities, and has also learned to read the many moods of the ocean, so he can judge the difference between a situation of potential discomfort and one of potential danger.

A MUSICAL
Westman

"A whale scientist's work isn't always as balmy as I'd imagined," I say as we begin the return to the marina, with the wind now against us.

"This is normal. You're always at the mercy of the weather, and storms seem to follow me." Roger has tied a panama hat on with a string under his chin, but the brim flutters in the squall, and spray has thrown rivulets down his glasses. Running across the choppy waves, the boat bounces hard; the ride jars our kidneys and our bones. But the ocean is a wild, beautiful tumult. I can understand why the painter J. M. W. Turner would have himself lashed to the mainmast of a ship and go out into the middle of a raging storm just to behold its color and fury. Below us, somewhere in the gelatinous phantasmagoria of churning blue, the whales aren't much aware of the storm. Their world, which has as much geography and real estate as ours, must feel entirely different. Slow as zeppelins, majestic and alert, whales navigate at their stately pace through a rich, com-

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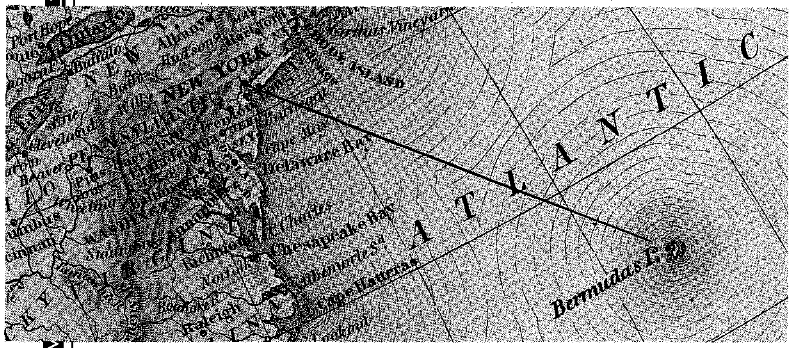

By any measure of the map this island does not exist. Yet to those who have sought it out, charted its existence, discovered its charms, it lives forever in a collection of memories as vivid as the break of day.

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These fortunate island travelers will always remember the charming Scandinavian natives, the magnificent dining room, the artful creations of the European chefs.

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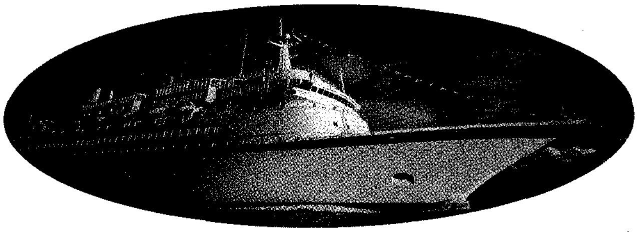

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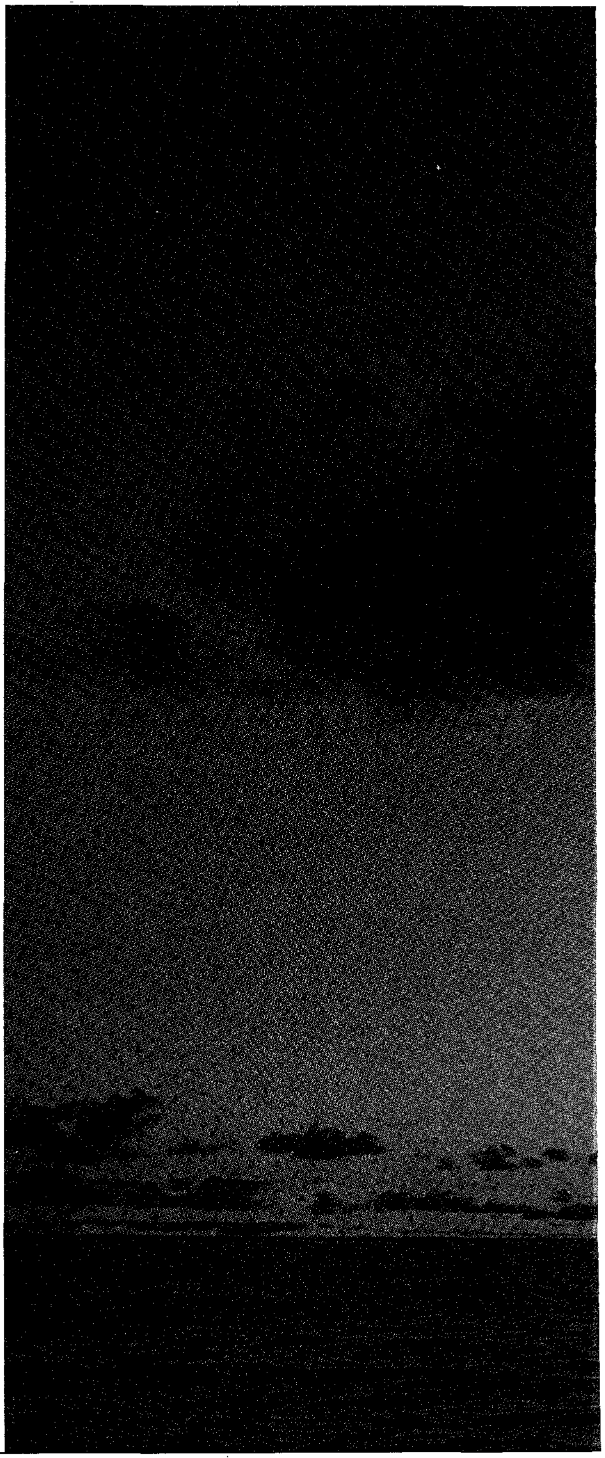

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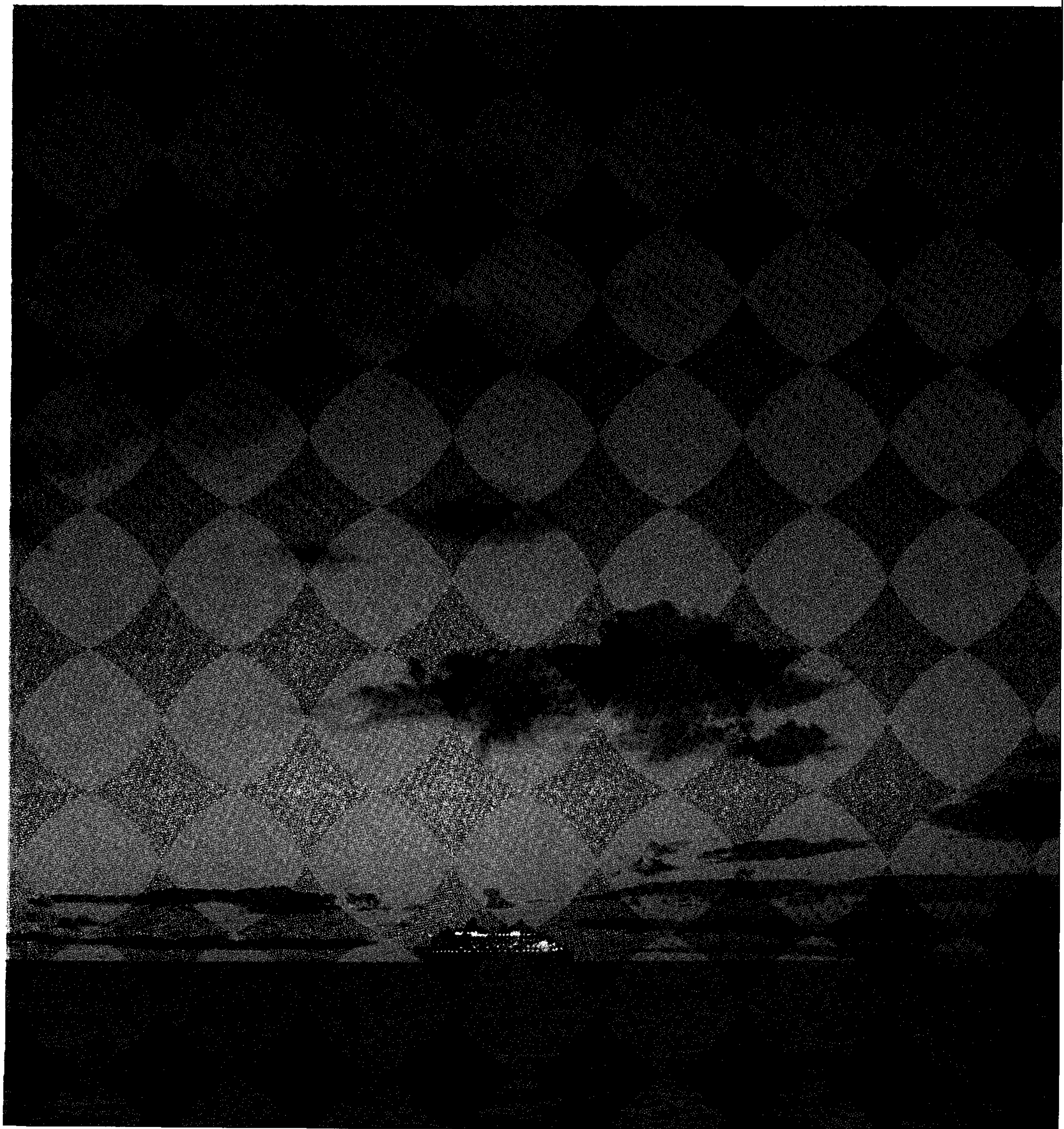

NAZAIRE CALDERA SOUTHAMPTON MAUI PICTON FORT-DE-FRANCE SANTAREM CAPRI SAN BLAS ISLANDS BOMBAY SINGAPORE ROME

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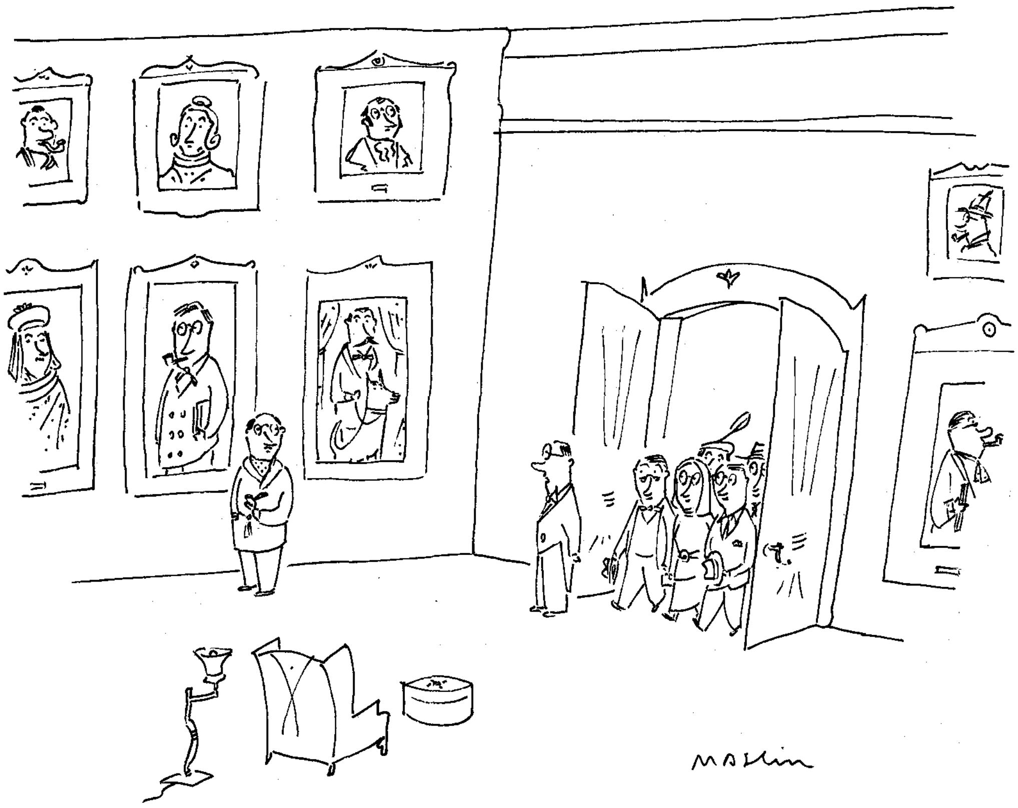

“Your living relatives, sir.”

• •

plicated landscape. There are mountain ranges in their world, great gorges and rift valleys and sprawling prairies, and even hot springs and volcanoes. We forget that the ocean floor includes some of the highest mountain ranges on earth—we just don’t see them. And there are the magnetic features, about which we know very little. Because we don’t steer along the magnetic web of the planet, we forget that other animals do. In some underwater valleys, magnetic signals are polarized in one direction; in other valleys, in the opposite direction. These can be “mapped,” and animals sensitive to magnetic changes can follow this map.

WHEN, at last, we’re back at the marina, cold, tired, and wet, we load the Zodiac onto a waiting trailer and head for a nearby fast-food restaurant to get a hot breakfast.

“What was it like the first time you heard whales singing?” I ask as we wait for our food.

“I was in Bermuda, as a guest of the late Frank Watlington, an engineer who worked for the Lamont Geophysical Field Station. He used to go out towing hydrophones when the Navy was firing off explosives, and record the sounds far away. But when he did this during humpback season he often heard the songs of whales, and they fascinated him. One April day, he played them to me in the engine room of a wooden minesweeper just like Cousteau’s Calypso. And although the boat was very noisy and loud, out of his tinny speaker came incredible sounds. I had never heard anything like them. They riveted my attention as nothing ever had. These were superb recordings he had made on bottom-mounted hydrophones that the Navy was using for purposes of listening to enemy submarines and that sort of thing. Later, he gave part of his tape collection to me. It’s some of those sounds that the world has heard since on the record ‘Songs of the Humpback Whale.’ ”

“What’s the most beautiful encounter with singing whales you can remember?”

“Oh, that’s easy,” he says, stretching his long legs out into the aisle and settling against the booth wall with a mug of coffee in his hands. He looks somewhere into the middle distance, and seems to shed the present easily. “Lying in the cockpit of a boat at night off Bermuda,” he says, “with a faint, gentle breeze, and the mast sweeping across and clouds of stars above you, listening to the sounds of whales, which are sort of flooding up out of the ocean through the earphones you’re wearing as you become part of the same rhythm that the songs dance to. The songs seem to be set by the rhythm of swells in the ocean. If you listen to whales when you are being borne on the sea, you can feel that the rate at which they’re producing a given phrase is about the same as the rate between the swells that are coming by. What a beautiful, extraordinary, compelling experience that is! You never tire of it. The ocean is the greatest of all echo chambers—there’s nothing like it on land. And when you listen over a pair of headphones to whales under beautiful recording conditions in deep ocean, it’s really as though you were listening from within the Horsehead Nebula, or some galactic space that is not part of anything you know.”

He takes a sip of coffee and goes on, “We all love the ocean’s surface with its beautiful sparkle blue. But beneath it, down deeper, whales are moving with slow, drifting currents—whales that are great, gentle, cloudlike beings, not just some *meaty animal.* Everything the whales do is so slow, so deliberate, outside the normal time sense of the human world. When you watch whales for an entire afternoon, watch them play, you don’t realize what they’re doing. You see things that look very slow and graceful. Only later, when you’ve looked at your day’s notes, you may put it all together and say, ‘Oh, my God, this animal was *playing.* That’s what I was seeing, but I was seeing it at a speed much slower than I’m used to.’ Whales teach us a new sense of time.”

In a nearby booth, a young man, wearing an electric-blue T-shirt on which the letters “M,” “A,” “U,” and “I” are arranged in the rough shape of the island, is reading a local newspaper. The headline and a drawing announce yet another occasion on which a whale has saved the life of a human being—this time by reportedly driving off sharks that were heading for a fallen surfer. Do whales have emotions like ours? I wonder. How intelligent are they? Do they have a mind of the

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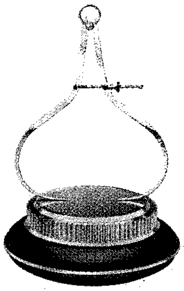

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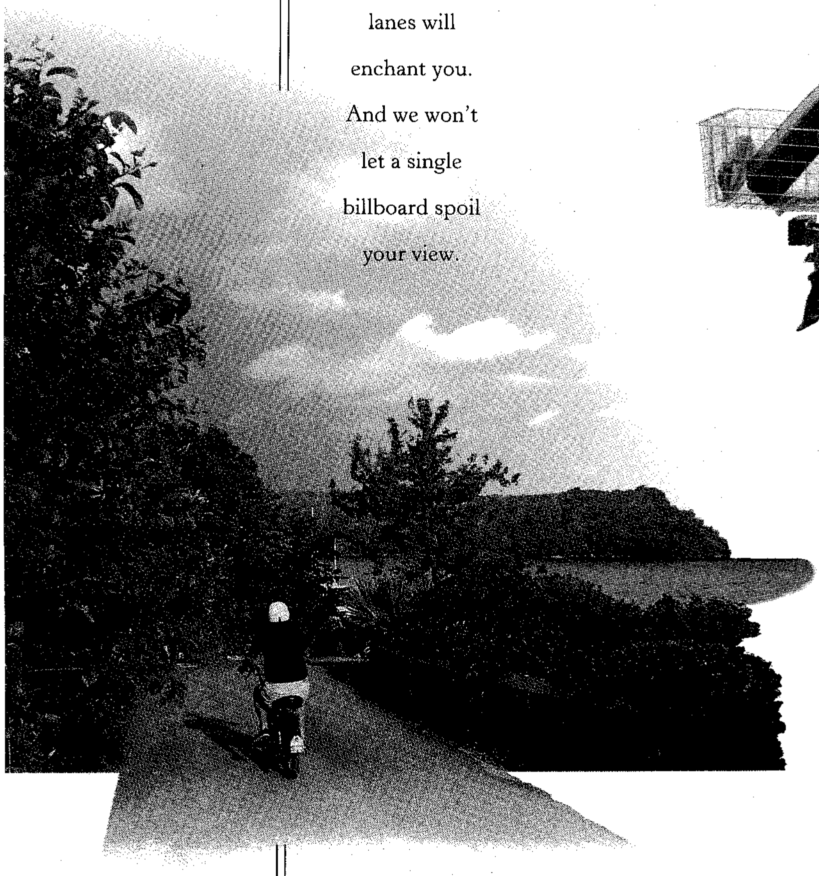

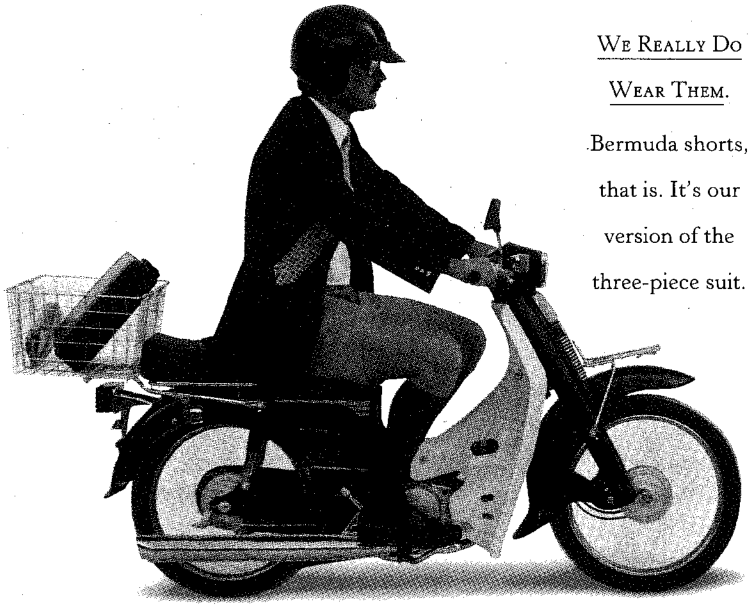

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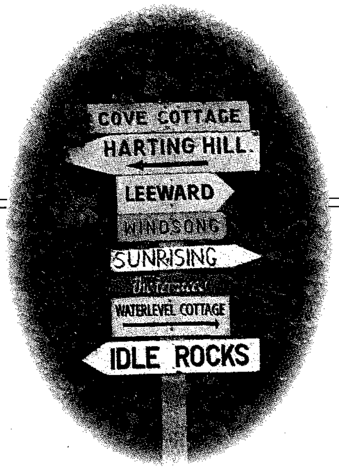
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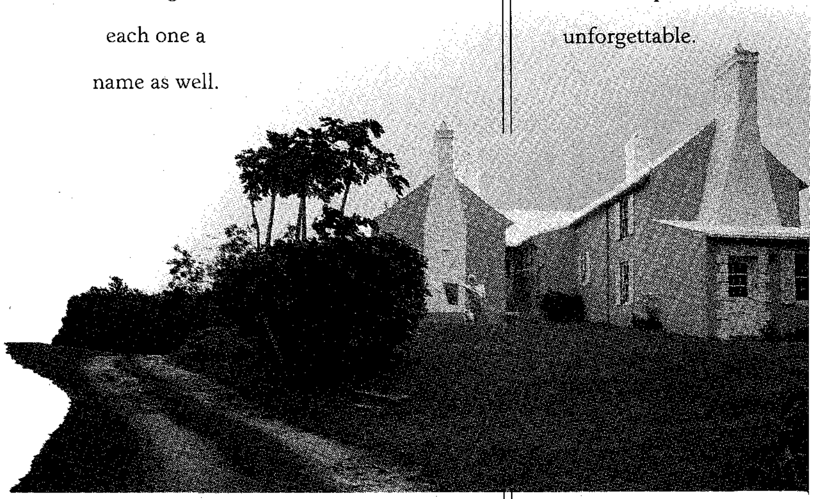

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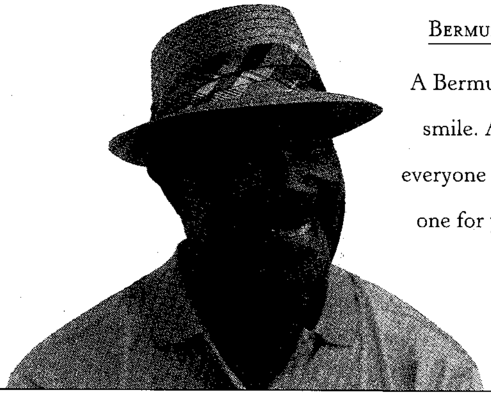

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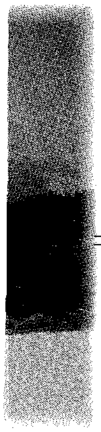

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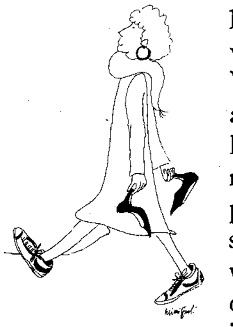
sort that would be familiar to us? "Remember those 'brutal facts' you were talking about?" I say. "Well, how conscious do you think whales are?"

Roger turns his fork over and nudges his slices of bacon into a dark, kelplike dune, cuts off a section, and eats it thoughtfully. "There are reasons to suspect that the brains of whales —and I'm including dolphins—are of equal complexity to, or even greater complexity than, the brains of human beings. These complexities must serve some important role in the lives of the whales and dolphins, but nobody really has a clue to what that role is—not even a persuasive theory yet about what it is that these animals are using their brains for. I will go out on a limb and say that the most interesting question in biology today is what dolphins are using their complex brains for; I can't think of anything that would be more interesting to know. You can say, 'Well, maybe they just have a large brain, you know, why *not?*' Well, I can tell you why *not*: it's because brains are extremely expensive things to maintain and operate. For example, during the first few weeks of life of a human being, whose brain-to-body ratio is not unlike that of a newborn dolphin, the brain requires about a third of the metabolism of the whole body just to run it. It's a very costly thing to have. So you don't just kind of end up having a fancy brain; you have a fancy brain because there's a compelling reason you need a fancy brain. It is selected for, and as soon as the advantage conferred by having it is gone you'd lose it, and lose it fast. What this means is that there must be something dolphins and whales are doing with their brains that's fundamental to their lives and probably completely different from anything you and I use most of the computing power of our brains for.

"Here's one of the standard unsupported guesses at what they're using their brains for: they're using them for fancy acoustic functions—by making a few clicks, they can not only hear how far it is to the ocean bottom in many directions but also figure out its structure and how soft it is and how many fish are hovering above it and which others are buried in the mud, and so on. Yes, those are all very important functions, but equally complex tasks are done by bats, with brains that are probably a thousandth the mass of the brains of dolphins, so I don't think that theory is going to answer the question. No, there's something they're using their large brains for which, I suspect, is completely different from what we use ours for. Ours, basically, serve and interact with two things: one, our opposable thumbs and grasping simian fingers, which, with our brain, make possible eye-hand coördination; and, two, language, and all that language does for us. Do whales have a language? Well, as I said, if there is a language to the songs of humpback whales it's very monotonous. They're repeating themselves endlessly, saying the same, perhaps very complex thing over and over for months at a time. So it won't do to say that they have a language which is in any sense equivalent to or similar to our language, if they use all its complexity and structure to say just a very few things. You could say that the song may be analogous to the carrier frequency in a radio, and that basically it is the minor modifications in the song which carry the message. I somehow think that's unlikely, because whales tend to be alone when they're singing—not in social groups, not in contact with other whales. The very first thing that happens when a whale comes near a singer is that the singer shuts up, and often a fight will ensue. That suggests that the song is a simpler thing—either a challenge or a wooing call. But it doesn't explain the big brains. I think the fancy, complex brains of whales are being used for things we have no intuitive understanding of whatsoever, yet what they're used for is critically important to the life of the whales. It must deeply affect their reproductive fitness. It must be crucial to their survival. We just don't know what it is."



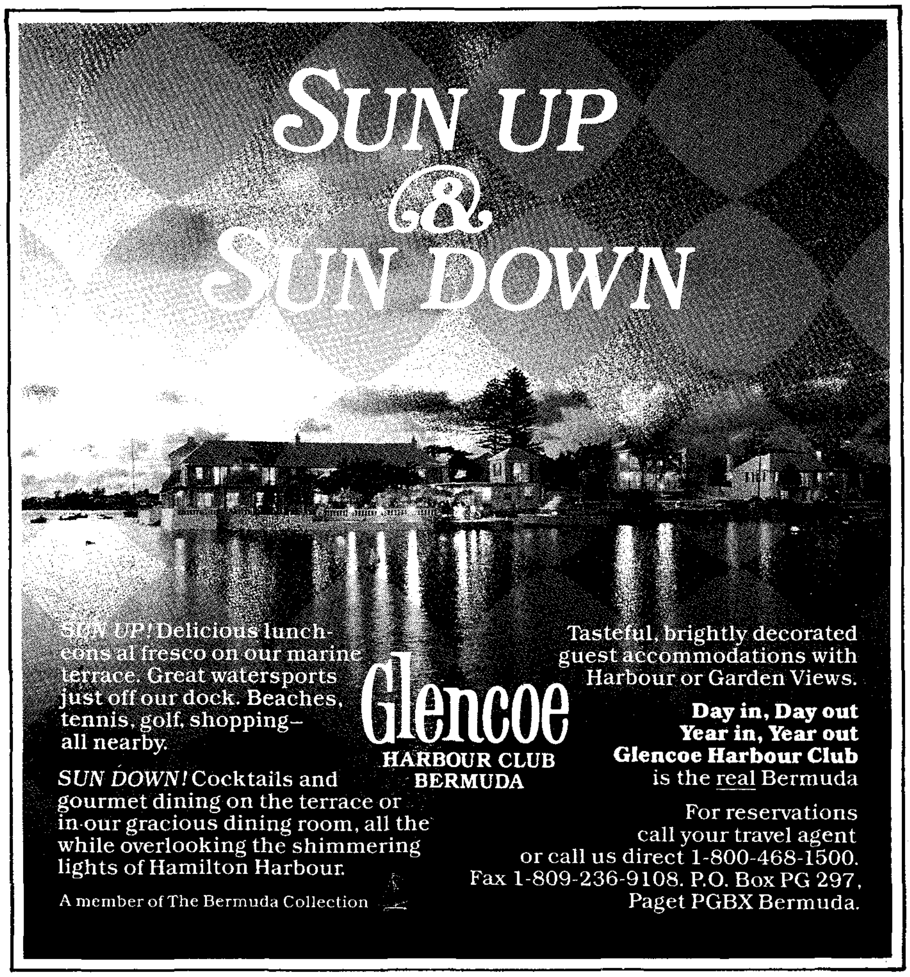
Roger goes on thoughtfully, "We may be the biggest flop that ever appeared on earth. People often wonder just how intelligent whales really are. But I could argue that the human brain is the most unsuccessful adaptation ever to appear in the history of life on earth, because it threatens its owner with self-annihilation in fewer generations than any other organism. Neanderthal man lasted only about sixty thousand years. We have lasted about a sixth of that time, and what are the chances that we'll last fifty thousand years more? In that sense, whales have an important lesson to teach us. Whales have a huge and complex brain but show no signs of threatening their own destruction. They haven't reproduced themselves into oblivion, they haven't destroyed the resources they depend upon, they haven't generated a giant hole in the ozone, or changed the atmosphere so that the earth might end up with a runaway greenhouse effect. The lesson whales teach us is that it's possible to have a brain of great complexity which doesn't result in the death of the planet. And also that we shouldn't necessarily admire intelligence for its own sake, because what our intelligence has resulted in is either unmitigated disaster or potential disaster that will be correctable only by steps so radical that at the moment no one sees any political wisdom in them. For a while, whales came close to extinction, and they became an endangered mystery—an extremely important endangered mystery, because they may have the answer to how you can enjoy the fruits of this wonderful, magnificent calculator-computer-imaginer in your skull without threatening everything you hold dear. Whales seem to have done that."

THE next morning, finding the seas a little calmer, we go out in a Zodiac piloted by a young, fair-skinned Englishman called Colin, who is studying whales. At regular intervals, explosions come from the nearby island of Kahoolawe, where the United States Navy is practicing bombing. At Molokini, Roger drops a white hydrophone into the water on a long black line, and puts on a headset. Then, smiling, he hands the headset to me. Painfully loud whale songs surge through both earphones. Three whales are singing the same song somewhere beneath us, their voices blending and mixing. A storm begins prowling Maui. The ocean looks cobalt blue, like an Oriental pottery glaze, and gray clouds are reflected in it. At times, it's the color and texture of a whale's skin.

"I think he's starting back up," Roger says.

"How can you tell?" I ask.

"From where the singer is in the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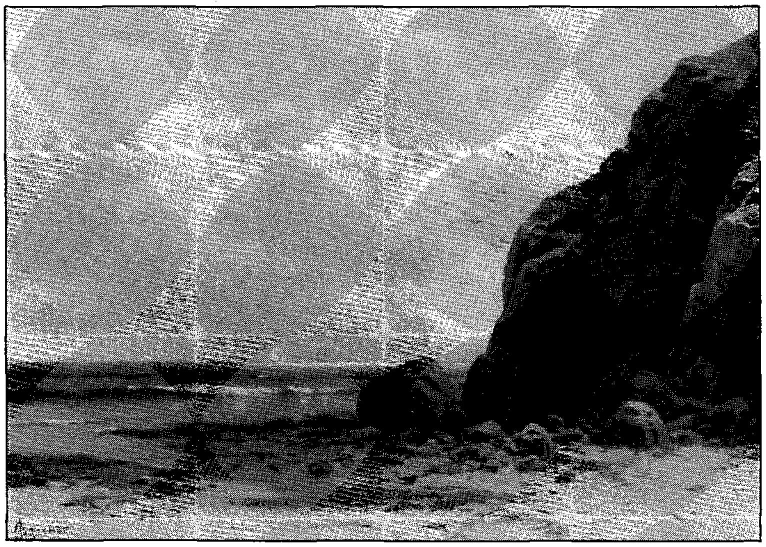

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song—at *rattle, rattle, rattle,*" he says. "I think it's the coming-up section, but I don't know this year's song very well yet."

The apparently silent ocean fills with white curds as it reflects the plunging storm clouds. The hydrophone drifts below the boat on its long lead. Molokini's structure creates a natural echo chamber, which concentrates the sounds. A slow hooting begins, as of an owl. It seems to come from every direction, and reminds me that Roger's doctoral work, at Cornell, was on how owls locate their prey—as much through sound as through vision, he discovered.

"What is that strange hooting?" I ask.

Roger smiles. "A singer. It's very close by."

"But in which direction? It seems to be coming from all over."

"The boat transmits the sound to you from all of its interior surfaces. It's as if you were sitting in the center of a loudspeaker."

Now I can understand how Greek sailors of the ancient Mediterranean, bewitched by eerie singing, thought that it came from Sirens. Although there are no humpbacks reported in the Mediterranean today, Roger is intrigued by the possibility that humpbacks once thrived there, among other whales, and were indeed the Sirens of Greek myth. At night, far from land, under a mantle of stars, lonely sailors could have heard the plaintive songs of the humpbacks but would not have been able to tell where the music was coming from as it swirled around inside the wooden hull of their boat, wrapping them in a cocoon of lamentation and desire. Whale songs may continue for many hours, even days, so the becalmed sailors could have grown unnerved and then drowsy, as the singing both bedevilled and enchanted them, and could have fallen asleep with Siren voices tugging at their dreams.

Colin leans over the side of the Zodiac and puts his head underwater, holding his nose, and then comes up dripping, his short blond hair swept into a punk style. Momentarily disturbed, the water surface goes back to being as slick as whale skin, and mottled by reflected clouds. "Sounds close," he says.

But close may be a mile or more away. Turning in a slow circle, I scan the horizon. Somewhere a whale is singing, and will surface to breathe, but I see no sign of it yet. "How do they arrange their bodies when they're singing?" I ask.

"Most of the time, they're head downward," Roger explains as he untangles the hydrophone wire. "But when they're at the surface, breathing, they're horizontal, and they don't interrupt the performance of the song to breathe. They pace themselves the same way a human singer does—catching their breath between phrases. A whale normally breathes at the same point in its song. But sometimes one will breathe at an inappropriate moment—catch a breath in the wrong place. When that happens, it doesn't interrupt the performance, and so songs with and without breathing in inappropriate phrases will sound almost the same. I don't sing, for example, 'Glory, glory [breath, breath] hallelujah.' I manage to breathe while producing the song, so as not to interrupt it. Whales do the same thing, and to me that suggests their singing is a conscious performance. They're good singers, who don't mess up a song with awkward breaths. When they reach the surface, they often make a 'surface ratchet' sound, sort of like a slowly opening creaking door, and I suspect that most of the time they start singing right after that surface ratchet, when they throw their tail into the air—'peak their flukes,' as it's called—and make the first phrase as they dive. One morning, off the Big Island, in a place where one seldom encounters whales, my former wife, Katharine, and I found a singer who was already singing when we began recording, and when we quit, deep into darkness, eleven hours later, it was still going, non-stop. Here, around Maui, where the whales are always interacting—getting into fights, chasing each other—a song rarely lasts for more than two hours, because another whale comes along and cuts in. A song stops when the singer is interrupted by another whale, a boat, a swimmer—any kind of stimulus that is curious or threatening, and needs the singer's attention."

Roger is covered with bruises and Band-Aids. One fingertip still shines from a patch of spilled Krazy Glue. As he records a song, he closes his eyes, and his mouth falls open, as if he were asleep. A straw hat with a Hawaiian-print band keeps the sun from his eyes. A speedboat cruises by, playing loud rock music, its partying crew unaware of the concert in full swing below them. After it has passed, we move to the windward side of Molokini, where its coral-covered wall drops six hundred feet.

I put on a snorkeling mask and fins and slip over the side, into a school of at least fifty Moorish idols—black-yellow-and-white fish, each with a small puckered mouth and a long spear trailing from the top of its head—and swim toward the wall, where brain coral lies in ribbons and parrot fish flash blue-green spangles. Taking a gulp of air and diving a few feet, I hear the moaning without the help of earphones. Now it's louder and accompanied by gurglings and creaks. Then a trumpeting sound, half elephant and half monkey, surges into a two-stage grunt—it starts low and swings high—followed by a stuttering lawnmower, and that changes to a finger being dragged across a taut balloon, then to a suite of basso groans and a badly oiled garden gate creaking open. Turning, I look for the singer, whose voice is everywhere, but see only raccoon butterfly fish—bright yellow with black masks—and a garden of coral. I feel as if I'd fallen into the middle of a millefiori paperweight. This singer, warbling with such panache, is most likely a male. I cannot see him, but his eerie song sends shivers down my back: it fills the waves with waves of music. Linda Guinee, of Roger's lab, and Katharine Payne, now a researcher at Cornell, recently discovered an astonishing new fact about humpbacks: they use rhyme to help them remember their long songs. Floating in what may be a whale's epic poem, I marvel at its strange embroidery. Each time I dive a few feet under the surface, I hear and feel the radiant booming again, and I wish I could hold my breath for hours

—stay down and listen with the whole ocean cupped to my ear like a single hand.

But at last, too tired to keep diving, I climb into the boat, and we cruise back to Maui. Rainbows form in the spray at either side of the Zodiac. The siren song follows us for some distance, then vanishes among shore sounds as we approach the marina. Thrilled to have felt the singing wash over me, I yearn to be near a whale in its own element, to watch its habits closely. Though that would be difficult with the shy humpbacks wintering at Maui, it may be possible elsewhere.

Half of Roger's whale study revolves around humpbacks and their songs. Studying them in Hawaii, where he's hemmed in by the constant jangle of tourists, speedboats, and hotel chains, makes relentless demands. The other half of his whale study takes place on the coast of Patagonia, at an outpost far from noise and society. There mother right whales raise their babies, eager males come courting, and it's possible to observe whale families at their daily doings. When I say goodbye to Roger in Hawaii, I know that we will meet again soon, in one of the wildest and most remote places on earth.

IN mid-October, I head for the wind-scoured slice of Argentina known as Patagonia, a land renowned for blustery deserts, unusual wildlife, and rugged, self-reliant people. Roger meets me at the airport at Trelew (named for one of many Welshmen who settled in the region), and we drive northeast for three hours, to the Valdés Peninsula, a bludgeon-shaped piece of land separating two bays. Because each of the bays has a small mouth, their waters are much calmer than those of the galloping Atlantic, and migrating right whales stop there every year to raise their babies and engage in courtship before moving south to the krill-rich feeding grounds of Antarctica. Twenty years ago, when Roger realized that the highly endangered right whales were pausing in the bays, he established a study site on the inside curve of the northern bay—on a somewhat hilly, scimitar-shaped beach below two cliffs—and the New York Zoological Society built a field station there. Technically, its address is Lot 39, but Campamento Ballenas is what most people call

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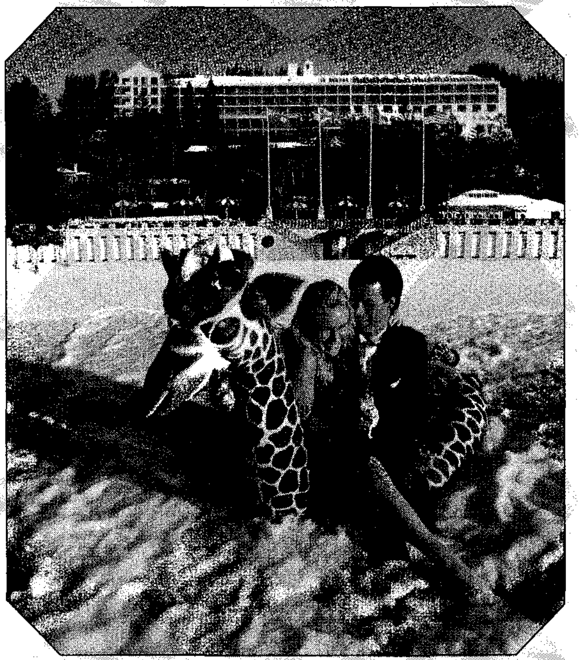

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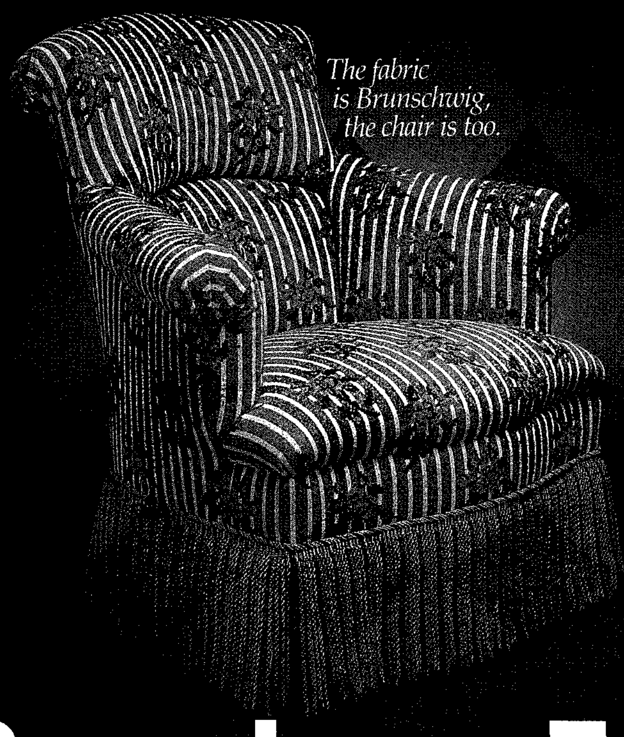

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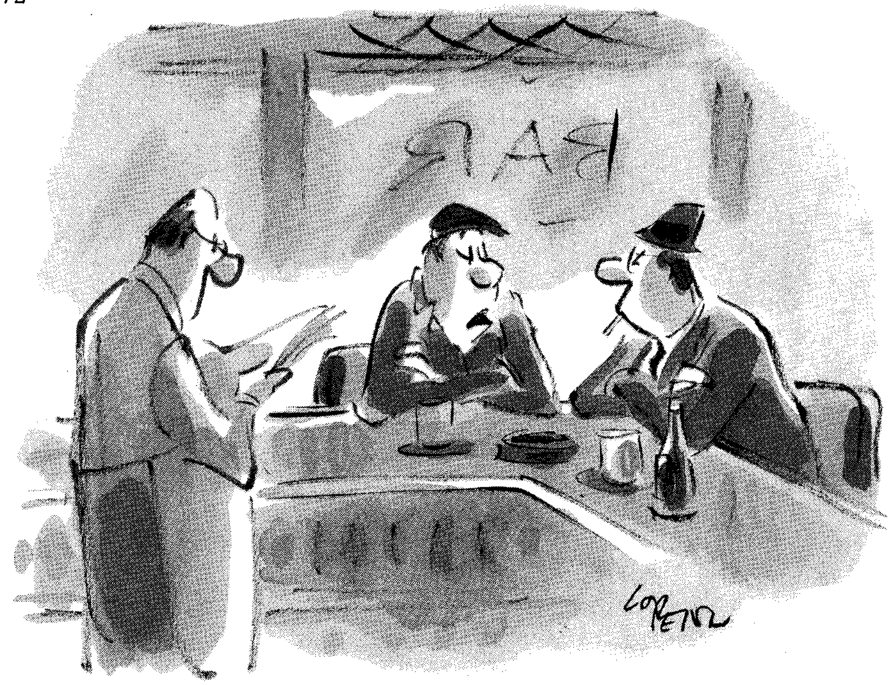


"I think globally, but I spend locally."

• •

it—pronouncing the double "l" as a "zh," as Patagonians do, filling even their language with the sounds of the wind.

The drive north takes us through flat scrub desert on a road as dusty as a mine shaft, and past a shrine rimmed with wine and Coca-Cola bottles. Many years ago, a woman died of thirst in this desert, but her infant miraculously survived, and legend has it that the Virgin Mary appeared at the spot where the baby was found. Now Argentines stop to leave a tribute of old bottles. Finally, we reach a gate in a wire fence. Roger opens it by fiddling with a lever system made of pipes and wires, and we proceed down a bumpy, wind-gutted, eroded road. On a rise overlooking the camp, we pause a moment. Below us, dwarfed by ancient, fossil-peppered cliffs on the rim of the ocean, and surrounded by thornbushes and ice plants, sit a small one-story house of white stucco, two quonset huts, and an assortment of tents. On the two cliffs—one right behind the main house, the other about a mile away—stand small corrugated-metal huts. Night is falling, and the ocean has begun to darken, but here and there a small burst of white, as if shot from an atomizer, floats over the water where a whale has surfaced to breathe.

At the camp, we pull up to the house. On a concrete porch are tripods, cameras, and telescopes, all roped to the roof beams to keep them from hitting the ground when they blow over, as they inevitably do. A whale's large weathered jawbone, attached to the porch wall by chains, makes a cozy bench. A wooden swing hanging from a rafter blows gently back and forth, as if occupied by a ghost. A handmade birdhouse tucked up against the porch roof holds a nesting brown wren-size bird. Standing next to the front door, part of a whale's skull—four feet across and about three feet wide—serves as a low table, and on it someone has left a windbreaker. The house windows are made to tilt down to balance binoculars.

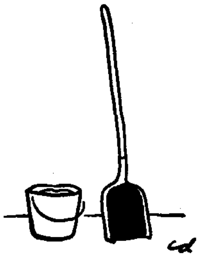
Inside the house, there are four bedrooms, a kitchen, a sitting room, a photographic darkroom, and a main equipment room. An alcove with a large window looking out onto the porch and the sea beyond serves as Roger's study; behind and beside a chair and a desk, shelves lining the walls hold skulls of animals found in the area, preserved specimens in jars, field notebooks, and other paraphernalia.

There has been an attempt to make a yard in front of the house, by edging an arbitrary area of blowing dirt and debris with fossil shells, but the wind has all but blasted it away. One shell hangs by a wire on a bush in front of the house—a reminder, perhaps, of some Christmas past. The cracked earth looks like pudding that has cooked dry in a pot. Despite the harsh conditions, flowers bloom there. Ice plants put up bright-pink cupped flowers with yellow centers. Another low, sprawly succulent is covered with hundreds of daisylike flowers. Tiny pinks nestle among tufts of tawny grass. Sheep fences weave in and out around the camp, and low "snake fences" run downhill to the beach. Graham Harris, a New York Zoological Society naturalist who lives in the nearby town of Puerto Madryn and has virtually raised his two children at the camp, built the snake fences to keep out local pit vipers—a poisonous, rattleless rattlesnake—but the fences have been buried in places by wind-driven sand, and in hot weather the vipers sometimes get in. In front of the house, across the dirt yard and beyond a sheep fence, is the boathouse—a corrugated-metal quonset hut that holds Zodiacs and a pungent whale skeleton. To the left of the house is a quonset-hut dining hall, and beyond that is the outhouse. A plaque on the door identifies the building as "The Tehuelche's Revenge"—a reference to the Indians who originally settled the region and were wiped out by the Spaniards, leaving only their myths and arrowheads behind. Inside, someone has neatly pencilled on the wall "Darwin's rhea was here."

The tents are tucked in among the thornbushes, either near the ocean or on a rise near the main house. I am to have a khaki tent billowing at the edge of the beach. After I zip the tent closed, horizontally and vertically, I crawl into my down sleeping bag. The wind, swivelling smartly through the thornbushes and gulleys, sounds like wet sheets flapping on a line. As I lie back to sleep, I hear a snuffling and gargling noise, which seems to be right outside the tent. Then a loud snort startles me. I unzip the flaps and look out. There is no wild animal lurking by my tent or on the beach. A huge moon floats low in the sky, and the night is pocked with stars. I feel as if I were inside a planetarium. Two large, cottony blurs hover overhead, and, to my delight, I realize that they are the Magellanic Clouds—neighbor galaxies visible only from the Southern Hemisphere. In the moonlight, the ocean pours its black satin, and then a small white cloud appears like a corsage just above the water. A loud snuffle follows, and I realize that I have been listening to the night sounds of whales.

In the morning, I wake to loud soughings and raspings, look out, and see four huge whales lolling close to shore. Rolling and blowing, they wave their flippers in the air, turn lazily, peak their flukes. Farther out, three more whales blow as they surface. Farther still, a lone whale breaches: hurls itself high into the air and shatters the water when it hits, sending up great columns of spray. Then it breaches seven times more. The bay is full of whales. It is as wonderful as discovering dinosaurs in your garden. Petrels, sooty shearwaters, and black-browed albatrosses soar along the beach. Oystercatchers triple-chime, like a doorbell, as they patrol the waves. The air is cold and damp, and I dress quickly and walk to the dining hall, just in time to see a hairy armadillo, which Argentines call a *peludo*, scurrying away from its front door with a crust of bread in its mouth. "PELUDO PALACE," says a plaque at the door. A wooden bench in front of the building is held up by two perforated cans of the kind that are used to ship snakes. All the antivenin for the local species of pit viper comes from snakes captured in this camp. Next to the bench, a vertebra of a right whale lies in the sun beside several old anchors.

Laughter seeps from inside the dining hall, and when I go in I find a long table with benches and chairs around it, at which eight people are sitting and drinking coffee from metal mugs or maté from a small gourd with a fluted silver-colored straw sticking out of it. The "chicos"—Roger's affectionate name for the university students Juan, Gustavo, Manolo, Gaby, and Anita—are spending the summer in camp to do whale research. Kate O'Connell, a petite woman of thirty, who is a conservationist and an expert translator, is also at the table, talking Spanish animatedly. Beside her, Tom Ford, a dentist from Massachusetts, begins doing an impression of Sylvester Stallone as Rambo. Tom is studying the bacteria in the exhalation of whales. To do so, he has to attach a petri dish to a fishing pole and dangle it over a whale's blowhole just as the whale is exhaling. Thus far he has had good luck. Judy Perkins, a blond woman in her forties, also a member of the lab, is in camp to collect skin samples from whales, for the purpose of mapping their genealogy.



Gustavo passes around cereal crackers and cheese; Kate opens a cardboard carton of orange juice; Tom gets out French bread and butter. Marmalade and a local delicacy—a caramel-like *dulce de leche*—are already on the table. Gaby holds the brown gourd full of maté in one hand. She offers me some, and my face twists as I drink it.

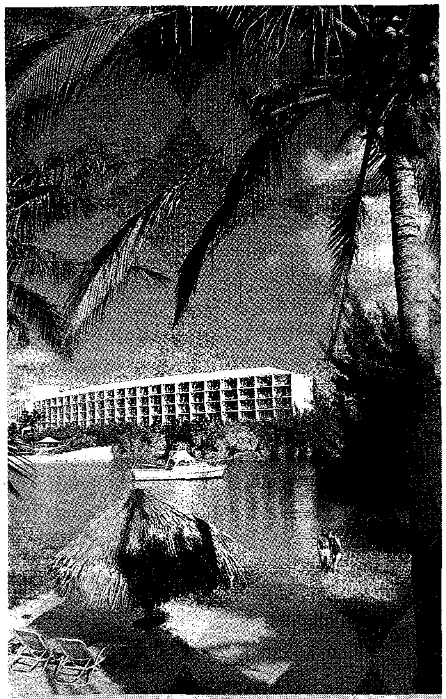
"*Te gusta*?" Gaby asks, laughing.

It tastes like strong, bitter spinach. With elaborate thanks, I hand the gourd back to her.

After breakfast, we pack sandwiches for lunch, put on exposure suits and fishermen's oilskins, and climb into the Zodiacs for a day on the water. There are many experiments to conduct, and the blustery day is just calm enough to allow us to launch the boats. I share a Zodiac with Roger—he's at the helm—and Tom, Juan, and Kate. When we see whale tails and a lot of spray and movement in the distance, we head straight for them, slowing down as we spiral closer. A confusion of flippers and tails slides across the surface of the water where a number of whales are rolling. One whale, in the middle of the group, suddenly rolls upside down.

"How many whales are we looking at?" I ask.

"That female," Roger says, outlining her body in the air, "is belly up at the surface because she's trying to avoid mating. There's a male on the near side of her"—he points out a long dark shape—"and also one on the far side of her." Now I see the two males surfacing and blowing. "But if you look down you'll see that there's a third male, holding his breath underneath her and waiting for her to turn from the belly-up position, in which her blowhole is underwater and she can't breathe, to a belly-down position. She has to roll in order to breathe. Sooner or later, she's got to roll toward one of the two males flanking her. But when she's on enough of an even keel to be breathing air, she's accessible to the male who's underneath her. A mating group usually includes this many males. If one of them leaves the group after he has mated with the female, she can easily avoid the two remaining,



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and that means they won't get a chance to mate with her. If there are four males, though, and if two mate with her and leave, the other two won't necessarily get a chance to. So you get into very complicated situations, in which some males have no chance to mate with a particular female."

"This doesn't sound very cheery from the female's point of view," I say.

Rolling over to breathe, the female whale makes an aggressive growl as a male puts a flipper across her back. With a twist, she pulls a few yards away, and the three follow her. She rolls onto her back again.

"O.K. Let's look at it from her point of view," Roger says. "If you are a female coming into this area, you don't have any means of choosing a mate, and chances are you're going to be raped repeatedly by males in a group. But there is one way you can favor a particular male. You can wait until you're mated with by the male you wish to be mated with and then just leave the area. You get the hell out as fast as you can. I think that's what's happening here."

As we watch the melee of mating whales, it's hard to tell which body parts belong to which whale. A shadow climbs the female's belly, and she flails and swerves. Being upside down doesn't protect her from mating, because a male's erect penis, which is tapered, can be as much as nine feet long, and it's controllable. A human male cannot voluntarily move his penis by more than a few millimetres, but a right whale can move his all around, like a finger. It's stored inside the whale, and when he's swimming around it's invisible. He also has internal testes. Human males have external testes because the testes must stay cool or the male won't be fertile. Nobody really understands how whales can have their testes inside, for streamlining, and not have their fertility affected.

Half a mile away, a whale's tail hovers in the air, splashes down, then hovers again, this time for quite a while. The whale is indulging in a favorite pastime: whales entertain themselves by balancing their tails in the air, rather as someone might hold a stick on the tip of his finger.

Kate breaks out a sack of ham-and-cheese sandwiches and small, sweet Argentine tangerines and passes them around. Roger unwraps a camera with a large telephoto lens, stands up, and photographs the fine display of mating and balancing whales so that he can later identify the participants. Then he carefully wraps the camera up and stows it in a watertight trunk.

"In right whales, you have a very curious thing," he says, sitting down. "The testes of a male blue whale, the largest whale in the world, weigh about seventy kilos—a hundred and fifty-four pounds—combined. You might ask, 'What do the testes of a male right whale weigh, since it's a much smaller animal?' The answer is one metric ton—two thousand two hundred pounds! These are the largest testes ever recorded in any animal."

"Why should there be such a difference?" I ask.

"For a very interesting reason, which has been most clearly demonstrated among the primates," Roger says. "Thirty-three species of primates have been studied in which something is known about both the weight of the testes in the males and their techniques of mating—whether a given female mates with one male or with several males. If you plot a graph of testes weight versus body size, you discover that those primate species in which several males mate with the same female have testes that are much larger than those in which only one male mates with a female. The classic example is the difference between a chimpanzee and a gorilla. The chimp, a species that has multiple matings, has testes much larger than a human being's, and they're very visible. Now consider the great, big, brutish gorilla male, which has total dominion over a group of females. Someone may eventually challenge him for his position, but until then when he mates with a female he has no doubt that he is the father of her offspring. He therefore has to produce only enough sperm to fertilize an egg in each of his females. The result is that he has such small testes that when you dissect a male gorilla you can hardly find them. The reason a chimpanzee has such large testes is that when he mates with a female she has probably just mated with another male, and if he is to have any hope of success he must produce enough sperm to wash out the contribution of sperm from the previous male and replace it with his own."

"And how about human beings?" I ask. "Where do we fall on this chart?"

Roger laughs. "Yes, that's the tantalizing question. If you look at the chart, everything with outsized testes is several males mating with a female, and everything with small testes is a monogamous species, in which females and males are faithful to each other. Human beings lie right on the borderline, and it's hard to predict which side they're going to fall toward. That may partly explain our marital ambiguities and the problems we cause ourselves socially. Consider whales and their mating systems. Right whales are the supreme example of incredible sperm competition. A male who is going to mate with a female is competing with a whole series of males. When you watch the mating groups here, for instance, you see that a single female ordinarily mates with several males in the course of an afternoon. If you're a male, probably your best strategy for any given mating session is to be the last, not the first. The male that mates last must be the one that has the most sperm of his left in the female. He is presumably producing colossal quantities of sperm and flooding it into the female's reproductive tract, trying to fill it as much as possible with his sperm and trying to wash out the sperm of the previous males."

"*Ballenas!*" Juan calls, pointing a few hundred yards behind us, to where three whales are swimming in tandem: a mother and baby are being followed at a short distance by an adolescent whale.

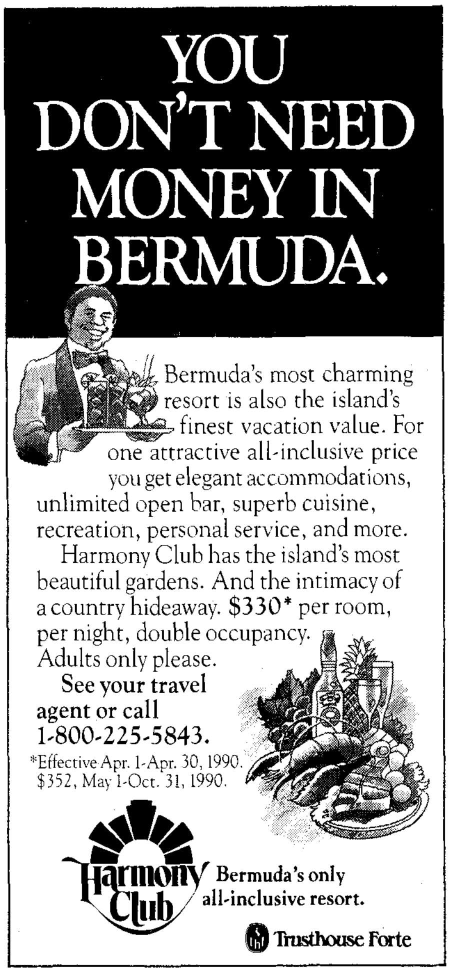
"That's probably her calf from the previous year," Roger says. "One of the things I've noticed over the years is that often when several males are trying to mate with a female, one of the males will try to push the female under the water so he can mate with her, and it's always a failure. But doing that often gives another male in the group a chance to mate. And I thought, What a bozo this whale is, until I finally realized that I was the one who was a bozo. What I was watching was one male pushing a female under for the purpose of letting another male mate with her. That's not a bad strategy if what you want to do in a few hours' session is be the last to mate. But it's the kind of strategy that would also invite cheating. The best way to get around cheating would be to be in a group of males that included male relatives of yours. Then even if it's another male who gets in the successful last mating—the mating that will result in fertilization of the egg—the sperm that won would at least have most of your genes in it. But now you've got a problem. You can't identify your father, nor can he identify you—you haven't a clue to who he is. So you can't go join your father's mating group. But there is a male relative you *can* identify, and that's your brother. You know who your mother is—you lived with her for a year or fourteen months before you were weaned—and if she comes back with a young calf, and if it's a male, it's your brother, and you know that.

"Well, here's where a truly fascinating thing comes up. The females with calves here in Argentina are spread out along the same section of coast. They move together as a group, but their interactions at very close range are fairly infrequent. They seem to be aware of where the others are, and they avoid one another in some ways but stick together very strongly. When a female with one calf swims up to another female with a calf, everything is O.K. until the calves begin to play. The second the calves begin to play, the mothers break it up—working hard, if necessary. Why? Because at this time of year the mother is starving. She has swum up from the feeding grounds, which are maybe a couple of thousand miles away, without eating; she has given birth to a calf without eating, and has pumped a blubber coat onto it and increased its size enormously without eating; and she has to get back down to the feeding grounds without eating. So she has been starving for several months. Every single motion that her calf makes she pays for, so what she does is lead it away from any kind of play—except the one kind she tolerates. She appears to tolerate play with an adolescent.

"Now, here comes our big frustration. We can identify whales best when we're looking directly down on top of them from a plane, because of their callosities. They're born with these callosities, whose pattern, placement, size, and form are different on every whale; we can easily tell them apart. But to follow the whales that way means paying two hundred dollars an hour to fly, and that's ruinously expensive. We can't afford to hang around long enough to observe a great deal of behavior, so we really don't know who these adolescents are that the females allow to play with their young. My suspicion is that they are older brothers, and that what the mothers are doing is allowing brothers to get to know each other, so that later on they can become a more effective mating group, which, in turn, will insure that her genes have a better chance of being passed on. We have one example of a mating group that stayed together for almost six weeks and travelled together for a hundred and eighty-five miles. That means that there would be a chance for this reciprocal altruism to go into effect. One male could help another today, and the other returns the favor tomorrow."

The adolescent whale drifts away from the mother and calf and begins swimming slowly toward us—curious, no doubt, about a black rubber raft with many moving animals inside. Then it blows and, tossing its tail, dives directly under the boat. A long dark shadow, spotted with white at one end, where the head's callosities glow, floats underneath us for what seems like minutes. It surfaces with a blow, rolls onto one side, and curves back toward us. Its tail has a slightly ragged line of notches, probably orca bites.

"Watch the tail," Roger warns. "If you ever see the tail coming down on you, leap fast into the water. Don't even think about it. Just jump. You don't want to get crushed between the boat and the tail." But the whale dives back underneath the boat, rolling onto one side, apparently so it can look at us, then surfaces on the other side and blows a fine mist, which pours over us



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and smells sweet, like wet fur. The whale circles back again, and this time it swims right alongside the boat. Its huge, dark head, floating at the surface, comes so close I can look into the blowholes, which are opening and closing like two hands held palms together and pressing wide apart at fingers and thumbs. A few hairs sprout around the blowholes. The young whale is only about thirty-five feet long. It has thick callosities, with whale lice clinging all over them, and the black skin is streaked with fine lines of the sort one sees on a window after rain. Males tend to have more callosities, and also scrapes along their backs from fighting; we think this is a male. It brings its mouth toward the boat and nudges it. Stretching out a hand over the gunwale, I touch its head delicately with one finger. Its whole body flinches. I wonder how it can be so sensitive. Its skin is startlingly soft, like oiled chamois.

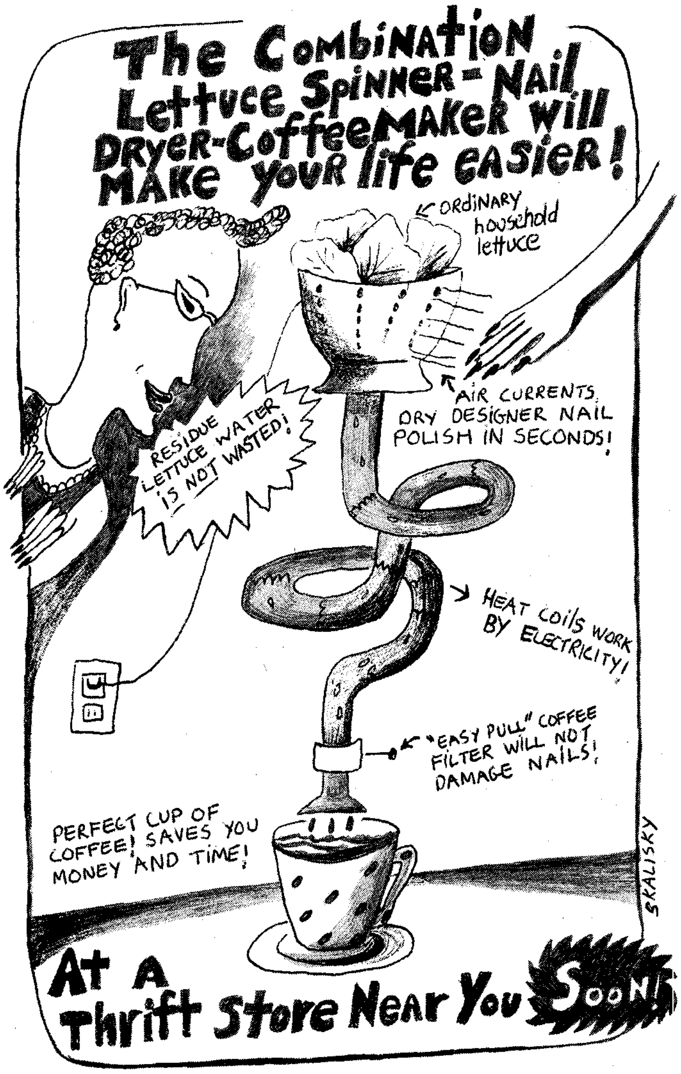
The sound of light artillery in the distance draws our attention to two breaching whales, hurling themselves into the air, half-twisting, like a top running out of momentum, and splashing onto their sides in thick geysers of spume. By now, the adolescent has returned to the other side of the boat and is languidly rubbing one whole flank along the inflated gunwale, as a cat might twine between someone's legs. After several passes, it swims away. The afternoon is almost over, and the data that Tom and Roger want have been collected. The sinking sun has lost a lot of its heat, and we are all starting to feel chilly, so we head back to camp. We watch a whale near shore rolling over and over. There are many shells and pebbles in the shallows, and it may be scratching, the way a dog enjoys rolling in the dirt. It waves a flipper in the air, follows with the semaphore of its flukes. At last, we land on the beach, and drag the Zodiac into the boathouse.

At sunset, the horizon is orange and the sea grows blue-gray. Stretches of wet sand, exposed by the withdrawing tide, shine like an array of hand mirrors. Venus appears overhead, as loud as a whistle blow, with the pinprick light of Mercury at its side. As night falls, the shallows shimmer like ice, and the winds begin to sound like freight trains. The wind has a large vocabulary in Patagonia. It shushes through the thornbushes, it rattles the corrugated-metal walls, it flutes through the arroyos, it makes the cliffs sound as if they were being scoured with a wire whisk. A night heron cries *owow*. A whale sneezes loudly, and the sound suggests an iron patio chair being dragged across a concrete floor. In the distance, three whales blow bushes of mist. Over the apricot horizon, the sky billows upward from pale green, through thick teal, to a translucent wafer of azure blue.

Dinner—by gas lamp—begins late by American standards. By the time everybody finishes a dessert of *dulce de leche* poured over bananas, it is nearly midnight. We all pile plates in the sink; there is no running water, and tomorrow we'll wash them in the ocean. With a flashlight, I hunt my way back to my tent, behind a sheep fence and among a clutch of thornbushes on the ledge of the beach; zip my tent shut; and crawl into my sleeping bag.

Fifteen minutes later, I hear footsteps outside. "Asleep yet?" Kate says. "I think there's an orca calling. Come on down to the beach."

At the shoreline, Tom stands holding a tape recorder that is attached to a hydrophone line running out into the bay. Over the years, Roger has produced a library of right-whale recordings. Right whales make many different sounds: funny, serious, strange; underwater, in the air. Probably they mean a variety of things; it's a mystery that remains to be solved. Under a full moon, sea and sky blur in a creamy fog both eerie and radiant. Small bioluminescent creatures flash green from the shallows. Close to shore, a large right whale blows loudly. Another whale sneezes. The hydrophone picks up a stretched meow. No orcas are calling, but many right whales sigh and bleat through the pallid fog under the brilliant moon. Shivering, we decide to call it a night, and return to our tents and huts for a chilly sleep.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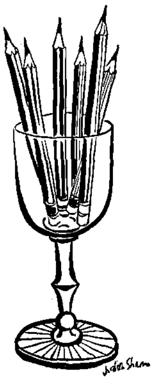
OVER the next few days, camp life continues its routine of hard work by day and lively bilingual meals at night. The ocean is too cold to bathe in, and people take turns driving an old pickup truck into Puerto Madryn to fill up the drinking-water jugs and buy fresh food. Inflation has skyrocketed in Argentina, and a truck bought for two thousand dollars ten years ago is worth several times that today, but no one can afford to sell such a truck, because new ones are even more expensive, whereas repairs are relatively cheap. All machinery—cars, generators, pumps—is in a perpetual state of mended dereliction. The camp's generator isn't working, and the water tanks behind the house are also broken. Sometimes dead rats are found floating in them, and we joke about passing out drinking water *con rata* or *sin rata*, as if they were just hairy ice cubes. Luckily, a workman is putting things in order.

Besides the core group of researchers in the camp, there are always dozens of new people, arriving and departing. Doug Allen, an underwater photographer with a thick Scottish accent, drops by regularly, and charms us with his stark independence and gentle gregariousness, a combination very Patagonian. We adopt his word "suss," which means to spy out something. One day, he casually reports that when he was in the water that morning, filming, he got too close to a calf and was walloped on the back of the head hard enough "to see stars." He believes that it was an accident, but he is clearly shaken; nevertheless, he will go out filming close to whales again tomorrow. A British filmmaker, John Waters, and his wife and their six-week-old baby, who was born in a nearby town, are living in camp for a while. A Japanese film crew stops by for two days of filming. Whale researchers from Puerto Madryn come and go, and so do two game wardens. The New York Zoological Society, which runs and partly supports the camp, has arranged for members on a guided tour of Patagonia to drop in for an hour. Another, similar group, everybody is delighted to discover, includes John Emlen, the now retired field biologist who inspired Roger, George Schaller, and many other scientists to go out and study the ways of animals in the wild.



What draws researchers, film crews, and tourists alike is not just the abundance of whales in the bays but the continuity of Roger's work. The callosities on right whales' heads make individuals easy to identify, as do the markings on the tails of humpbacks, and whereas the social systems of humpbacks are difficult to study—they have never been observed mating, for example—here at the whale camp researchers can live and work very close to right whales and watch their social behavior and record their sounds. Roger feels fortunate to have found a species of whale that can be conveniently studied from shore. The camp is conducting the world's longest whale study based on known individuals. Each year, the researchers fly over in a plane, take photographs, and compare them with a file of known individuals. At the last count, nine hundred and sixty whales have been identified. There are believed to be about twelve hundred right whales in these bays, and there are known to be some right whales near South Africa and some off Australia, out of a total of only about thirty-five hundred left in the world. Roger studies humpbacks in many areas but right whales only in Patagonia, at this remarkable site.

The day after the Japanese film crew has packed up its gear and disappeared down the road in a tornado of dust, Roger and I sit on the porch steps and talk about Japanese whaling. If Roger has been especially generous with the film crew, which is making a two-hour documentary to be shown on Japanese television, it is because Japan desperately needs to change its attitude toward whales.

"The world has whales that appear to be intelligent, that can sing songs, change those songs and use rhyme, all the while employing laws of composition remarkably similar to those of human music," Roger says. "They form bubble nets of great intricacy and complexity, and coöperatively feed together in clever ways. This is not the sort of animal that you should turn into fat and oil and lipstick and margarine and cat food and corset stays. Whaling isn't something that has ever improved people very much. I'm going to Japan later in the year to talk with the Japanese people about whales. Once the people learn about this animal, their indifference, which is always based on ignorance, will be replaced by fascination, which is based on knowledge. I haven't the slightest doubt that their feelings about whales will change, and, of course, they'll decry whaling, just as other peoples of the world have."

"The Japanese people have been good at protecting cranes, albatrosses, and other endangered animals," I say.

"I have no quarrel with the Japanese people, only with their whalers—ruthless hunters who have no future," Roger says. "I had a grandfather, a lumberman, who cut nothing but walnut trees, sometimes for whole years at

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a time, and that excess on his part, and on the part of his contemporaries, insured that I would never have walnut trees except as the most exotic of woods. He was shortsighted. Was there anyone warning him? I bet there was. Going on with the destruction of a species until it's brought to the point of extinction is madness—not just a little mad, or slightly mad. It's authentic madness."

A SUDDEN wave of laughter pours across a slope near the house, where six people are holding what look like golf clubs. Some of them are wearing sunglasses and golf hats. Nine small numbered orange flags mark what seem to be holes, and each person carries a bright-orange ball. Roger and I shake our heads in disbelief at the sight. Unlikely as it may sound, the whale camp is home to the toughest—and most remote—miniature-golf course in the world. And it's Patagonia's only miniature-golf course. Tom built it for Graham Harris's children, and brought golf clubs all the way from Boston. As another burst of laughter rises from the fairways, we leave the porch and stroll over to the tournament.

"Yes," Tom says, chewing a big cigar, his green sunglasses flipped up at a right angle to his prescription glasses. "Golfito San José welcomes you." He hands me a putter and an orange ball. Around us, nestled among bushes and various gouges in the earth, are nine almost invisible holes of golf. The edges of the holes are lined with fossil oyster shells and miscellaneous bric-a-brac, including a whale tail vertebra, the keratin part of a horse's hoof, and chert (gemlike pebbles, which cover most of the peninsula). Prickly quilimby bushes are everywhere. The holes themselves are rusty cans dressed with beach sand. The hazards are arroyos, as well as live lizards that sometimes dart into the open, guanaco turds, seal bones, tufts of grass, splintered shells, dried ice-plant roots, and blowing dust. On the second hole, there is a "tarantula hazard," too—the burrow of a trap-door spider that sometimes scrambles out to see what all the commotion is about. The fairways, also lined with fossil shells, make doglegs and run along crazes in the earth. One hole includes a ski-jump rail from a salt train that used to transport one of Patagonia's few exports. Another hole requires shooting down a spout made of an old stovepipe. The final hole is a deserted hairy-armadillo den rather than a rusty can. The flagpoles are made from rods that once held up the snake fence. The flags themselves are ragged scraps of orange fabric that were used at one time as aerial guideposts. The "clubhouse" is an old gray wooden packing crate. In Patagonia, nothing is ever wasted.

Gustavo putts, misses the hole by inches, swears, in Spanish, "Oh, the whore that gave birth to me," and lifts up his ball, marking its final resting place with three sheep turds. Gaby, who has her dark hair tied back with an orange bandanna, steps up to her ball, which is resting on an upside-down beer-bottle cap, swings her hips in an exaggerated golfing move, and chips the ball past an eroded guanaco vertebra and close to the hole. Anita, in a blue surfing T-shirt, steps up and gets ready to putt. Tom holds his hand up and says, "Nope. One of the laws of this game is: When a burying beetle crosses the fairway you don't shoot. It's a beetle hazard." We watch a glossy black beetle run across the dirt and disappear under a bush.

"Ah, yes, silly me—I forgot," Anita says. Then she takes her shot, sending the ball over a bird skeleton, down a drop, and into the center of a thornbush.

Suddenly, a whale breaches about half a mile offshore, and we stand, clubs hanging idle, and watch in wonder as it breaches again and again. What power it must take to lift fifty tons of solid animal out of the water and twirl it around in the air. Still, the motion looks balletic—floating, graceful, controlled. A few hundred yards south, another whale gets in the mood, leaps into an aisle of air, and breaches repeatedly, too.

TUESDAY evening, I shift my gear to the corrugated hut on top of the hill behind the house, from which I'll have a panoramic view of the bay. This means climbing a steep, skiddy winding path for three hundred feet whenever I need something, but the hut rattles wonderfully in a dozen registers of metal and wood, and becomes an instrument played by the Patagonian winds. The walls gyrate like a rocket during lift-off. The wind slaloming through the dunes gives one a hallucination of footsteps outside.

Quite often, the roof bangs so hard at opposite corners that it sounds as if a hand were ripping it right off. A narrow bed attached to one wall has a small window beside the pillow, cut there at the request of a young woman who wanted to see the moon rising as she fell asleep. On another wall, a large window looks out over camp and sea. A third wall is a bookcase with peeling shelves, and the fourth has nails as clothes hooks, with a warped table beneath them. The entire hut is only about six feet by eight feet and perhaps seven feet high. A candle sits in a wobbly three-legged holder and pours wax down its shoulders as it gutters in the draft. Although the hut gets hot during the day, it's not wise to leave the door open, because sheep or guanacos or pit vipers might wander in.

At sunset, Roger and I sit on the jawbone bench on the house porch and watch the horizon become a simmering caldron of red. Enthralled by Doug's account of swimming close to whales, I'm puzzled by how few of the people in camp have been tempted to do the same.

"It's those last ten feet," Roger says, leaning against the wall, which has grown warm and cozy in the late-afternoon sun. "That's where most people find that their nerve breaks down."

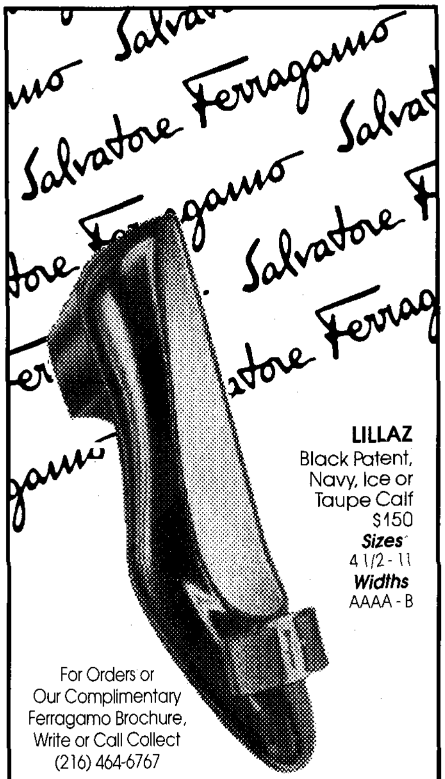
"But that's what life is all about," I say. "That's where you find all the intimate details. How awful it would feel, at the end of your life, to look back and know that if you had just stuck in there a few more feet you would have witnessed something truly astonishing."

Roger nods. He has spent his life walking the narrow corridor between the whale's world and the human being's world. "I think you can judge people quite well by the distance at which they drop back," he says. "Think how many miles all the people here had to fly, how many hardships they had to endure, how many hours they had to wait, how many people they had to deal with, just to get down here. It's like that every year. Some people drop out before they ever leave the States. Some are doing fine research on the shore. Some can tough it out in the boats, but they panic at the thought of being in the water with whales. Some can even get into the water and watch at a distance, but the last ten feet daunt them. Despite all the rigors and turmoil they've gone through to get here, despite their fascination with whales, which they spend their lives studying, they just can't face those last ten feet. I don't think this is limited to whales. It has to do with the way a person needs to know life."

At the south end of the bay, a whale lifts its tail into the air and holds it there for five minutes while drifting downwind. Then it swims back upwind, turns around and puts its tail in the air, and drifts downwind again. Roger slaps his knee in delight. The whale is "sailing"—using its broad tail to catch a stiff breeze to blow it across the bay. Right whales sometimes practice sailing for half an hour at a time; it appears to be one of their favorite sports. You'd think that lots of animals would sail, since sailing saves so much energy and is probably great fun, but the only other animals that do it are three species of jellyfish. As evening deepens, we sit quietly, watching the upside-down whale sail merrily across the bay. Close in, the ocean seems to be moving fast from right to left. But on the horizon it doesn't seem to be moving at all. Three oystercatchers fly low across the sand in front of us, scolding a petrel until it flies out of their territory.

"No time to dawdle," Tom says as he and the chicos bustle in and out of the house, busily constructing things from cardboard, coat hangers, duct tape, and scraps. Tonight is Halloween, and everyone has been invited to the fiesta, but we have to come in costume—a challenge to those of us living in camp with very limited resources. Soon whale researchers from Puerto Madryn begin arriving with their families, bringing food and costumes, and everyone is eager to greet old friends and talk shop with colleagues who haven't been seen for many months. In due course, a brass bell summons us to the Peludo Palace. Our normal squadron of twelve has swollen to twenty-five, with children of whale scientists and seal investigators racing about dressed as clowns, ballerinas, and pirates, fake daggers drawn.

At last, the costume parade begins. Juan has built himself a large guanaco head out of cardboard. John is a mosquito: he wears welders' goggles on his head and has a boat propeller lashed to



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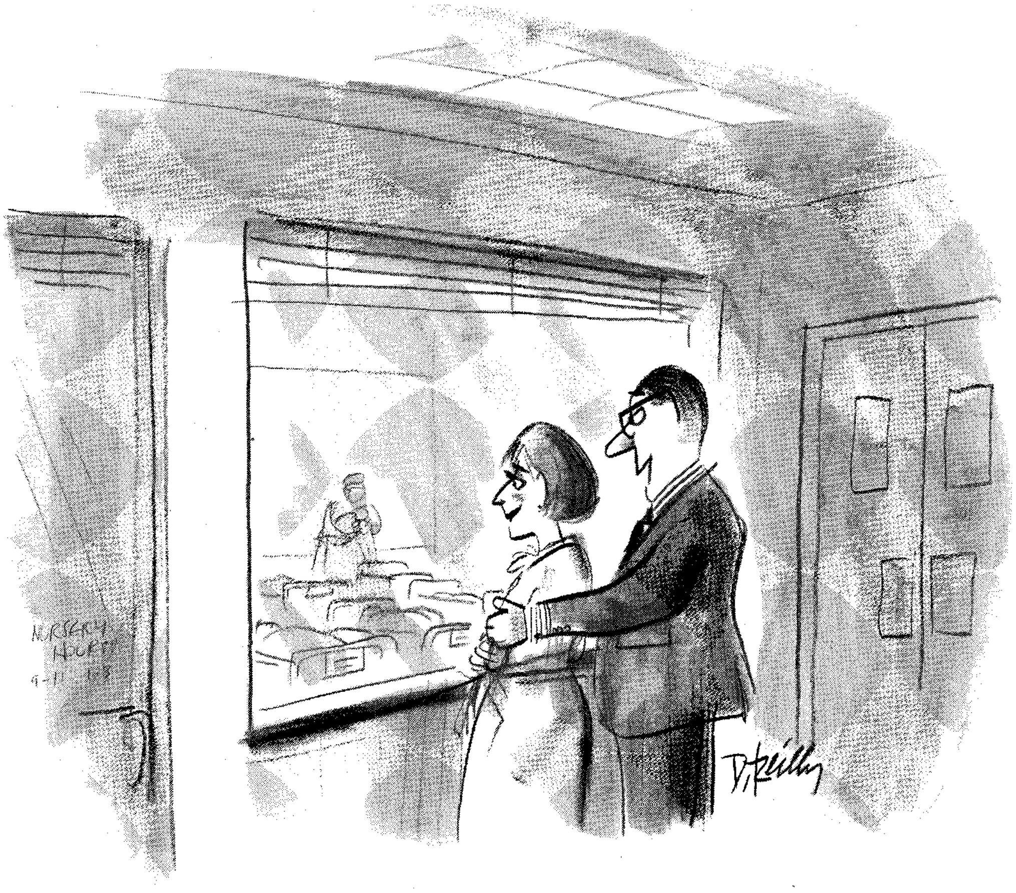


"They're lucky little guys: home, hearth, and family are definitely the hot buttons of the nineties."

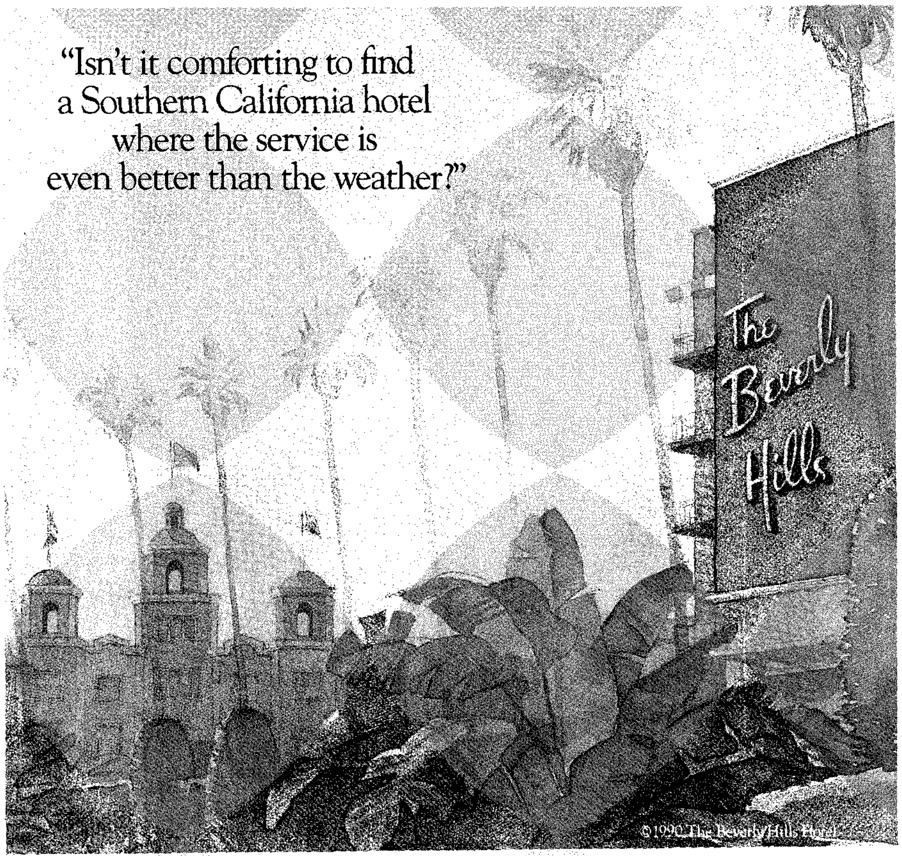
his back. Rubén, a visiting airplane pilot, stomps in as Rambo, complete with fake muscles and fake bombs. His wife, Yvonne, shuffles along as an armadillo, covered in corrugated roofing. I come as a weather system, *la tormenta*, by wearing silver asbestos flameproof boots, a fake-leopard-skin jumpsuit, and a silver collar, with my long, thick hair attached to a trellis of coat hangers. I carry a lightning bolt cut out of cardboard and covered with silver-foil liners from chocolate bars. Tom and three of the chicos parade in last, in the form of a long, sprawling right whale, thanks to black plastic garbage bags stretched over a skeleton of wire, baleen made from long grasses, a cardboard tail, and cut-up plastic-foam cups pasted on the head, as callosities. With a tank of compressed air, Tom makes the sound of blows, and the four-man whale lurches around the room like a Chinese dragon, to the squealing delight of the children. As we eat our dinner (cold cuts, hot dogs, and cake), a loud racket of artillery fire begins. This time, it is not breaching whales but real artillery. Outside the hut I see red rockets flash along the horizon, followed by explosions of white. The Argentine Navy has begun target practice over the ocean, no doubt to the terror of the whales.

After dinner, I suss my way up the hill with the aid of a flashlight, close the door with a clang, and climb into my sleeping bag on the bed. Orion is just starting to rise, and I can see it through the window beside my head. Up north, Orion tosses one leg over the horizon as it rises, but here it appears to rise upside down, feet first, its sword stars gleaming. Of course, it's not Orion who has changed position but I myself. Still, it's strange to find the sun rising and setting in unfamiliar directions, and the constellations leaping skewed out of the blackness. I have brought along a Whitney's star-finder and a "pop-up sky," and when I hold them overhead I spot Cetus, the whale, slithering out of the north, and Delphinus, the dolphin, directly overhead. According to Greek myth, the sea god Poseidon was lonely without a wife, and he sent a dolphin messenger to court Amphitrite, one of the sea nymphs. The dolphin was so persuasive that she agreed to marry Poseidon, and in gratitude he set the dolphin to swim forever among the stars. In another story, Ovid claims that Delphinus is the dolphin that saved the life of the seventh-century poet and musician Arion. According to this tale, Arion was returning home to Greece from a tour of Sicily when some of the sailors on his boat plotted to rob and kill him. Outnumbered and apparently doomed, he asked to be allowed to sing a final song. So hypnotic was the music that it attracted a group of dolphins. Seeing them, he leaped into the water, and one of them carried him home safely to Greece. In this story, it is Apollo who adds a dolphin to the constellations, along with the lyre of Arion.

Throughout history, dolphins have been credited with acts of intelligence and generosity of spirit; indeed, many cultures have stories of dolphins' saving people's lives. Karen Pryor, a longtime researcher, was once asked about dolphins' pushing people to shore, and she said, "Well, you never hear from the drowning people dolphins pushed *away* from the shore." For all we know, there may be some truth in that. But dolphins do seem to enjoy playing with human beings, and they do so in various bays around the world. One of the strangest dolphin stories emerged last year, when the Iranian government accused the United States of using "kamikaze" dolphins to mine harbors and boats. A similar scenario was proposed by the seventies film "The Day of the Dolphin": a dolphin researcher, played by George C. Scott, finds his dolphins nabbed by thugs hoping to use them to deliver a bomb to the President's yacht. The dolphin trainer Richard O'Barry, in his memoir, "Behind the Dolphin Smile," confides that he was once approached by the C.I.A. with a request to train dolphins for military use. The Navy consistently denies that it is doing any such research with dolphins, but insiders have described a Navy technique of training dolphins to ram a person in the abdomen—an adaptation of the dolphin's natural strategy of killing a shark by ramming it in the gills. Dolphins are probably the most intelligent whales. Certainly they can transfer information among themselves. Chimps can learn sign language, and one was observed teaching the language to her offspring. Suppose dolphins, which may be even brighter than chimps, started training their young in the techniques of how to kill human beings? Consider how fast the "friendly-whale phenomenon" swept through the gray-whale population. It wouldn't be long before the oceans were full of killer dolphins. Instead of our having a friend in the sea, we would have a deadly enemy, specifically trained to kill us. With these ominous thoughts I close my eyes under the gaze of Delphinus, let my mind fill with the tumultuous sounds of the wind, and fall asleep.

WE say dawn breaks, as if something were shattering, but what we mean is that waves of light crest over the earth. On Wednesday morning, rinsed by those light waves, I walk along the beach, beside overhanging cliffs, and realize what an ancient place the camp is. The cliffs are almost solid fossil—uplifted prehistoric seabeds. Fossil oysters large enough to have held more than a pound of meat jut out from the top, and fossil sand dollars perhaps seventy million years old lie at its base. Also on the beach is an amazing array of dead penguins and other birds. In the tide wrack lie feathers, flippers, mummified animals, and countless shells. To reach the water, I cross dunelike ridges of stones. One thing the ocean does surprisingly well is sort according to size. There are fields of large stones, then ridges of medium-sized ones, then areas of even smaller stones. Looking out at the water, I see a mother and baby whale lolling in the shallows slightly to my left. When did they arrive? Rolling on her side, the mother whale swings a flipper up and nurses the baby. When a pack of seals appears and begins playfully pestering them, the baby snuggles up to its mother and cups its flipper around her. The whales appear to have stopped in the water, but, however fast I walk toward them, they always seem to be just a yard ahead of me. Finally, I leave them and head for the Peludo Palace.

After coffee, cheese, and cereal crackers, Roger, Judy, and I get into a car with Rubén, the pilot, and set out for an airstrip half an hour away,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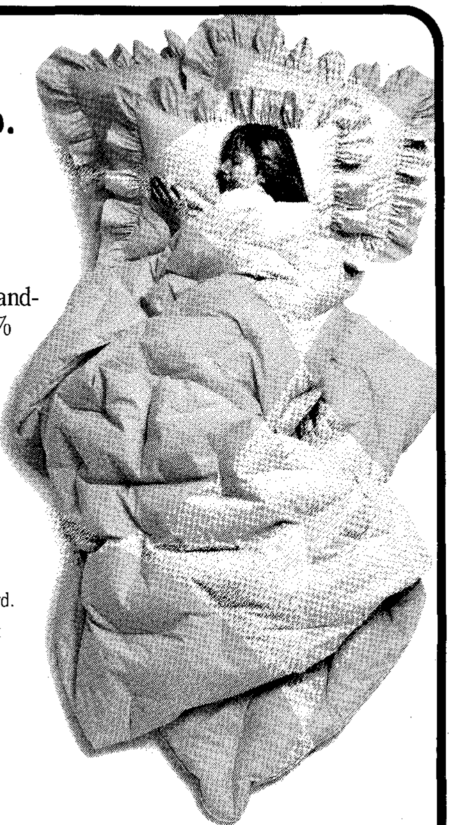

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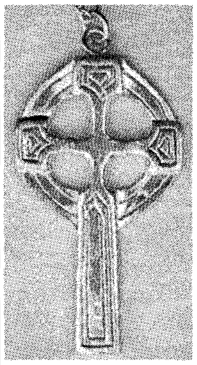

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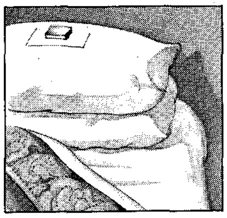

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where he keeps a Cessna 182. Each year, Rubén flies Roger and other camp people out over the bays to photograph whales. We climb aboard and head for the southern bay, which is packed with whales. Rubén spots whales in the water, flies straight to them, and does steep turns around them at three hundred feet while Roger crouches on a seat and shoots pictures of each animal. On an outline of the peninsula I pencil in "♀+♀+" (two females with one calf each) at our approximate position and, a little farther along, another "♀+." As Roger finishes each roll of film, I hand him a fresh one, and mark the number of the roll, and the date, on the used one. After an hour of steep turns, we head back to the airstrip. Rubén rolls out a yellow drum of gas and attaches to it a green hand pump that looks like a coffee grinder, and Judy pumps gas into a hose that Rubén feeds into a can topped with chamois (to filter out contaminating water) and then pumps the gas from the can into the wing. It is a lengthy process. Then Rubén and Judy climb aboard, and in a moment we are airborne again, flying over the great flat deserts. Sheep trails converge and overlap at far-flung water tanks. In a few minutes, Rubén lands on a dirt road, pauses just long enough for me to get out, turns the plane around, and takes off, to spend the rest of the day photographing whales. I begin walking home down roads that resemble gutted riverbeds. A herd of ten guanacos takes flight on spotting me. Two maras ("rabbits with miniskirts," Roger calls them) scamper away as I pass, and lizards swagger under bushes. In an hour, I stand on the rise overlooking camp. Two boat trails leading from the boathouse to the water tell me that the chicos are already out at work. When I get to the house, I'm amazed by the stillness. Everyone is gone. Climbing up to my hut, I take off my jacket and walk out to the cliff hut, a little less than a mile away. An icy morning has turned into a torrid noon, and the temperature will no doubt drop to near freezing by nightfall. From the cliff hut I see below me in the water the same mother and baby I saw earlier. I recognize the mother because she has a large, distinctive wound on one flank, and the callosity on her snout, which would normally be teardrop-shaped, is hollowed out at each side, forming a sort of parenthesis. When I described her during breakfast, I was told that some earlier observer thought the callosity resembled fangs, and thus she was named Fang. Her new calf nestles beside her. They have spent all morning close to camp. The sunlight makes a glittering path over the water. Each time the whales surface, drops of water sparkle around them.

Fang and her calf are close below me, but the whole bay is awaltz with mother whales and baby whales. Right whales are pregnant for only about a year, which seems like a very short time; after all, the elephant gestation period is twenty-two months, and a whale is far larger than an elephant. When an elephant calf is born, it has to scramble up onto its legs, but a whale calf can go straight from the amniotic fluid of its mother's womb into the womb of the ocean; it doesn't have to support itself. Whales, being warm-blooded mammals, who breathe as we do, could, in principle, live on land, but if a whale were on land its organs would be crushed under its own weight. It needs the water to support its massive size—that's one of the reasons stranded whales fare so poorly. Because a whale baby doesn't have to stand up, its bones are flexible: you could take the rib bone of a baby right whale and bend it back and forth as if it were made of hard rubber.

A newborn whale calf does not leave its mother's side but often swims along eye to eye with her. Sometimes the mother whale swims so that her tail touches the calf with every downstroke. Sometimes the calf gets obstreperous and bangs into its mother, or even breaches onto its mother's back. Finally, she will lose her patience and punish it, by rolling over quickly onto her back as the calf is ready to ram her for, say, the fifteenth time, catching the small of its tail under one of her flippers, and rolling back to hold the baby underwater, so that it begins spluttering, wheezing, sneezing, coughing. After a little while, she lets it go. The calf then resumes its eye-to-eye position and swims along docilely. Hungry calves will butt their mothers, climb all over them, and slide off them, trying to get the mother to roll over and nurse. Occasionally, a mother will calm a hyperactive calf by sliding underneath it and turning over to pick it up out of

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the water and balance it on her chest, holding it between her flippers. Every now and then, a mother, with a flipper the size of a wall of my hut, will reach over and pat the calf sweetly.

For hours, I sit quietly and watch the doings in the nursery bay. Fang rolls onto her weighty side, and her baby nurses. Then the baby gets rambunctious and strays a little too far. Mother lows to it in a combination of foghorn and moo, calling it back within eyeshot. From time to time, Fang submerges slowly, her tail hanging limp and loose and trailing one tip of a fluke in the water. She makes burpy sounds with occasional moans, and I think she may be napping.

When a whale sleeps, it slowly tumbles in an any-old-crazy, end-over-end, sidewise fashion, and may even bonk its head on the bottom. Or it may just be quiet, looking like a corpse. When it rises again, to breathe during its sleep, it comes up as slow as a dream, breaks the surface, breathes a few times, and, without diving, falls again slowly toward the bottom. Off Patagonia, right whales sometimes sleep in the mornings on calm days, and some of them seem to be head-heavy, with light tails: they fall forward, and their tails rise out of the water. Humpbacks are rarely visible when they're sleeping, because they are less buoyant and usually sink rapidly, but all the behavior of right whales is easy to study, because they're at-the-surface whales. They're so fat that they float when they're relaxed, and they spend a lot of time with their backs in the air. When they're asleep at the surface, their breathing rate drops tremendously, and, since they don't close their nostrils completely between breaths when they're asleep, sometimes they snore. When they wake, they stretch their backs, open their mouths, and yawn. Sometimes they lift their tails up and twist them, and then they go about their business. Often, on calm days, they sleep at the surface for so long that their backs get sunburned, and then the skin peels the same way human skin does, but on a big, whale-size scale. The loose skin from their backs falls into the water and becomes food for birds. When they breach, they shed a lot of loose skin as they hit the water, and seagulls, realizing this, fly out fast to a breaching whale.

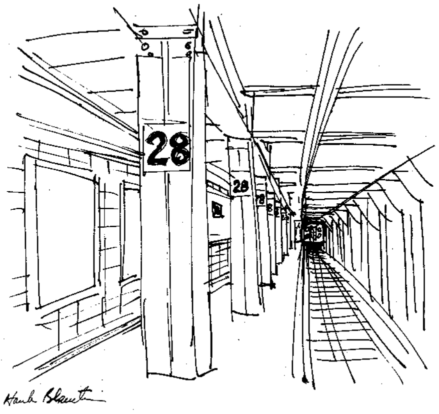
A bizarre habit has developed among the kelp gulls in this bay. Instead of waiting for the whales to shed sunburned skin, they land on the whales' backs and carve the skin and blubber right off. A gull sweeps down and gouges a piece of skin and blubber from Fang's back, and Fang, in obvious pain, shakes her head and tail simultaneously, flexes almost in half, then dives. The gull flies to a pair of whales nearby, raids them, and flies off. Other gulls—brown-hooded gulls—will harmlessly yank off long strips of skin and actually set up short-lived feeding territories on the backs of their own particular whales. When Roger first started studying right whales at Valdés Peninsula, he noticed that only brown-hooded gulls were peeling the skin off the backs of sleeping sunburned whales; soon, however, the kelp gulls not only learned this technique but also began carving holes in backs. The result is that the backs of whales like Fang are pitted with craters made by kelp gulls. When a gull lands on a whale's back, the whale panics. This year, there are fewer whales in the bay, and Roger thinks that the kelp gulls may be chasing them away, to bays where kelp gulls don't yet know the trick of landing on whales' backs.

Juan appears at the edge of camp, on foot, apparently hiking in from a neighboring bay. By the time I get down to the house, he is just arriving there.

"Tired?" I ask, with an inflection that says I really hope he isn't. "Want to go find some whales?"

He grins. "Just let me get a Coke, then *vamos*."

I put on a leotard and tights, and begin crawling into a half-inch-thick wetsuit, which includes Farmer John overalls, a beaver-tail jacket, boots, gloves, and a hood. There is so much neoprene in the suit that I'll need to wear weights around my waist to keep from bobbing on the surface.



Sitting on the porch whale skull, John watches me suit up. He looks anxious. "Be careful," he says. "This morning, I was out in a boat with Tom collecting breath samples, and the calf of that mother over there"—he points to Fang and her baby, just around the curve of the beach—"rocked the boat with its flipper and gave us a scare."

To tell the truth, I'd feel much safer with Roger on board if I'm going swimming, but I've been waiting all week for the water to calm down, and all afternoon for Roger to get back from flying. It's past four now, and I very much doubt whether he'll be back before sunset. So it's now or never.

Juan returns from the Peludo Palace and tugs on a thin wetsuit and boots, and we go down to the beach. Manolo is there, and joins us in the Zodiac. Heading north along the bay, we come upon two mothers and calves, but the mothers, protective of their calves, move them away. Juan would like to find a young adult to work with. He has been collecting loose skin for Judy and then slipping into the water to photograph the heads of the whales it came from in order to identify them. This afternoon, I hope to join him, staying just behind but looking out for loose skin while hoping to get a glimpse of a whale in its element. We search for an hour, but find none in the mood to be approached. Finally, we head back toward camp and, coming around a bend, discover Fang and her calf still playing. We cut the motor about two hundred yards from them. Juan and I slip over the side of the boat and swim toward them, approaching as quietly as possible, so that they won't construe any of our movements as aggressive. In a few minutes, we are only yards from the mother's head. Looking down, I see the baby beside her, underwater, its callosities bright in the murky green water. Slowly, Juan and I swim all the way around them, getting closer and closer. The long wound on Fang's flank looks red and angry. When her large, dark tail lifts out of the water, its beauty stuns me for a moment, and then I yank Juan's hand to draw his attention and we pull back. Fang is forty-five to fifty feet long and weighs about as many tons, so all she would need to do is hit us with a flipper to crush us, or swat us with her tail to kill us instantly. But she is moving her tail gently, slowly. Right whales, with their baleen plates, are grazers: we don't look like lunch. She swings her head around so that her mouth is within two feet of me, then turns her head on edge to reveal a large white patch and, under that, a dark eye shaped like a human eye. I look directly into her eye, and she looks directly back at me, and we hang in the water, studying each other.

"I wish you well," I think, concentrating hard, in case it is possible for her to sense my mood. I don't imagine she can decipher the words, but many animals can sense fear in human beings. Perhaps they can also sense other emotions.

Her dark, plumlike eye fixes me: for a while, we stare deeply at each other. The curve of her mouth gives her a Mona Lisa smile, but that's just a felicity of her anatomy. The only emotion I sense in her is curiosity. That shines through her watchfulness—it's apparent in her repeated turning toward us, her extreme passivity, her caution with flippers and tail. She seems to be doing just what we are—swimming close to a strange, fascinating life-form, taking care not to frighten or hurt it. Perhaps, when she heard us slip over the side of the Zodiac she thought it had given birth and we were its young. In that case, she may be thinking how little we resemble our parent. Or perhaps she understands only too well that we are intelligent beasts who live in the alien, dangerous world of the land, where whales can get stranded, lose their bearings and equilibrium, and die. A whale's glimpse of us is almost as rare as our glimpse of a whale. Whales have never seen us mating; they have rarely, if ever, seen us feeding; they have never seen us give birth, suckle our young, or die of old age. They have never observed our normal social habits. They would not know how to tell our sex, since we hide our reproductive organs. They would find it hard to distinguish between a clothed, short-haired, clean-shaven man and a clothed, short-haired woman.

When Fang saw us in the Zodiac, we were wearing large, dark plastic eyes. Now we have small eyes shaped like hers—but two on one plane of the head, like a seal, not an eye on either side, like a whale or a fish. In the water, our eyes are encased in a glass jar, our mouths are stretched around a rubber tube, and our feet are flippers. Instead of diving, like marine mam-

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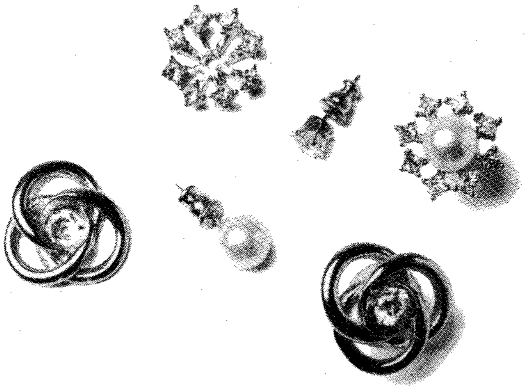

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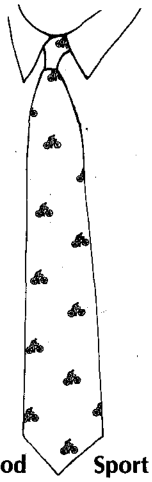

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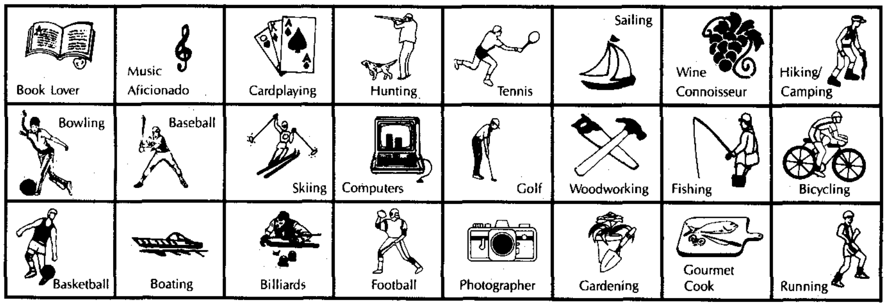

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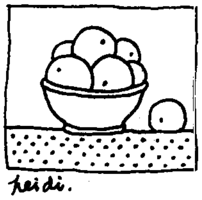
mals, we float on the surface. To Fang, I must look spastic and octopuslike, with my thin limbs dangling around me. Human beings possess such immense powers that there are few animals that make us feel truly humble. A whale does, swimming beside you, as large as a reclining building, its eye carefully observing you as it chooses not to devastate you. Although it lives in a gliding, quiet, investigate-it-first realm, it is not benign, like a Zen monk. Aggression plays a big role in its life, especially during courtship. Whales have weapons that are equal in their effects to our pointing a gun at somebody and wiggling a finger and blowing him away. When they strike each other with their flukes in battle, they hit flat, but to display power they sometimes slash the water with the edge. That fluke edge could break a person in two instantly. A whale could slam a person with its tail and break every bone. But such an attack has never taken place in the thousands of times that people have been known to swim with whales. On rare occasions, unprovoked whales have struck boats with their flukes, perhaps by accident, on one occasion killing a man. And there are three reported instances of a whale breaching onto a boat, again resulting in a death. They don't attack swimmers. In many of our science-fiction stories, aliens appear on earth and a terrible fight ensues, in which everyone uses weapons that burn, sting, or blow up. To us, what is alien is treacherous and evil. Whales clearly don't visualize aliens in that way. So, although it is frightening to float beside an animal as large and powerful as a whale, I know that if I show her where I am and what I am and that I mean her no harm she will return the courtesy.



Suddenly, Juan pulls me back a few feet, and, turning, I see the calf swimming around to our side, though staying close to its mother. Although it is as large as an elephant, it still looks like a baby. Only a few months old, it is as frisky as a pup and rampantly curious. It swims right up close, turns one eye at us, takes a good look, then wheels its head around and looks at us with the other eye. When it turns, it swings its mouth right up to my chest, and I reach out to touch it, but Juan pulls my hand back. I look at him and nod. A touch could startle the baby, which may not know its own strength. In a reflex, its tail or a flipper could swat us, or it might not know that if human beings are held underwater—by a playful flipper, say—they can drown. Its large flippers hang in the water by its sides, and its small callosities look like a crop of fieldstones. When it rolls, it reveals a patch of white on its belly and an anal slit. Swimming forward, it fans its tail, and the water suddenly feels chillier: it has stirred up cold from the bottom. The mother swims forward to keep up with it, and we follow, hanging quietly in the water, trying to breathe slowly and kick our flippers as little as possible. Curving back around, Fang turns on one side in order to see us, and waits while we swim up close again. Below me her flipper hovers, as large as a freight elevator. Tilting it very gently in place, she appears to be sculling; her tail, too, is barely moving. There are no sudden gestures, no acts of aggression. Each time she or the baby blows, a fine mist sprays into the air, accompanied by a whumping sound, as of a pedal organ.

We human beings do not have the whale's insulation of blubber to warm us in these frigid waters, and Juan and I, growing cold after an hour of travelling slowly along the bay with Fang and her baby, begin swimming back toward the beach. To save energy, we roll onto our backs and kick with our fins. When we are a few hundred yards away from Fang, she puts her head up in a "spy hop." Then she dives, rolls, lifts a flipper high into the air, like a black rubber sail, and waves it back and forth. The calf does the same. Juan and I laugh. They are not waving at us, only rolling and playing now that we're out of the way, but it is so human a gesture that we automatically wave our arms overhead in reply. Then we turn onto our faces again. Spears of sunlight cut through the thick green water and disappear into the depths, a bottom reveals itself as tawny brown about thirty feet below us, and soon the sand grows visible, along with occasional shells, and then the riot of shells near shore, and, finally, the pebbles of the shallows. Taking off our fins, we step from one realm into another: from the whale road, as Homer called the ocean, back onto the land of human beings.

—Diane Ackerman

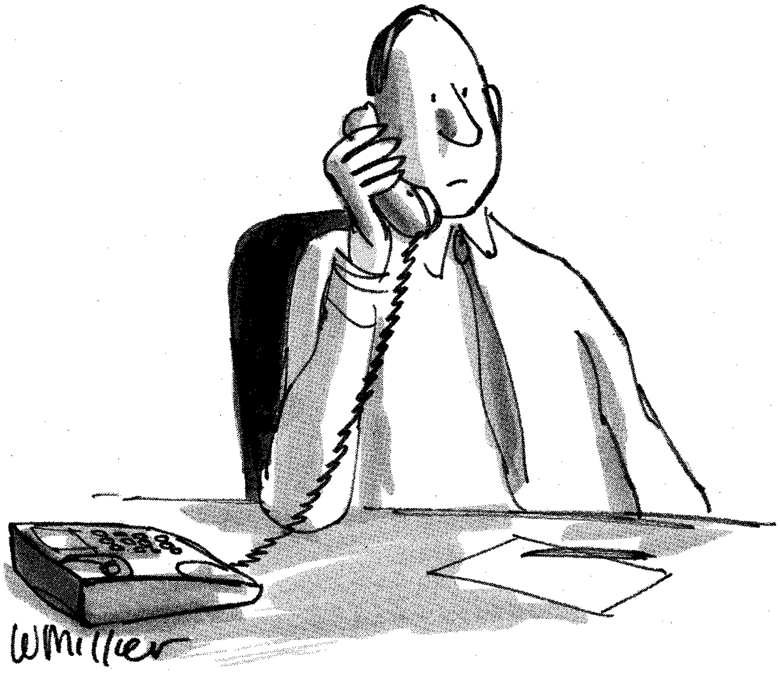
LETTER FROM LOS ANGELES

Harrison Gray Otis, the first successful editor and publisher of the Los Angeles *Times* and in many ways the prototypical Los Angeles citizen, would seem to have been one of those entrepreneurial drifters at once set loose and energized by the Civil War and the westward expansion. He was born in a log house in Ohio in 1837. He went to work as an apprentice printer at fourteen. He was a delegate at twenty-three to the Republican National Convention at which Abraham Lincoln was nominated for the Presidency. He spent forty-nine months in the Ohio Infantry, was wounded at Antietam in 1862 and again in Virginia in 1864, and then parlayed his Army connections into government jobs, as a journeyman printer first at the Government Printing Office in Washington and then at the Patent Office. He made his first foray to Southern California in 1874, to investigate a goat-raising scheme (it never materialized), and pronounced the place "the fattest land I ever was in." He drifted first to Santa Barbara, published a small daily there without notable success (he and his wife and three children, he noted later, were reduced to living in the fattest land on "not enough to keep a rabbit alive"), and then struck out for Alaska, after lucking into a ten-dollar-a-day government sinecure as the special agent in charge of poaching and liquor control in the Seal Islands.

In 1882, a forty-five-year-old man with a rather accidental past and unremarkable prospects, Harrison Gray Otis finally managed to seize the moment: he quit the government job, returned to Southern California, and put down six thousand dollars—five thousand of it borrowed—for a quarter interest in the four-page Los Angeles *Daily Times*, a failed paper started a few months before by a former editor of the Sacramento *Union* (the *Union*, for which Mark Twain was a correspondent, is the oldest California daily still publishing) and abandoned almost immediately to its creditors. "Small beginnings, but great oaks, etc.," Harrison Gray Otis later noted of his purchase. He seems to have known immediately what kind of Los Angeles he wanted and what role a newspaper could play in getting it. "Los Angeles wants no dudes, loafers and paupers; people who have no means and trust to luck," the new citizen announced in an early editorial, already shedding his previous skin, his middle-aged skin, the skin of a person who had formerly had no means and trusted to luck. Los Angeles as he saw it was all capital formation, no service. It needed no "cheap politicians, failures, bummers, scrubs, impecunious clerks, bookkeepers, lawyers, doctors," he said. "The market is overstocked already. We need workers! Hustlers! Men of brains, brawn and guts! Men who have a little capital and a good deal of energy—first-class men!"

The extent to which Los Angeles was literally invented by the Los Angeles *Times* and by its owners, Harrison Gray Otis and his descendants in the Chandler family, remains hard for people in less recent parts of the country to fully apprehend. At the time Otis bought his paper, there were only some five thousand people living in Los Angeles. There was no navigable river. The Los Angeles River was capable of providing ditchwater for a population of two or three hundred thousand, but there was little other groundwater to speak of. Los Angeles has water today because Harrison Gray Otis and his son-in-law Harry Chandler wanted it and fought a series of outright water wars to get it. "With this water problem out of the way, the growth of Los Angeles will leap forward as never before," the *Times* advised its readers in 1905, a few weeks before the initial vote to fund the aqueduct that was to bring water south from the Owens River, two hundred and thirty-three miles to the north. "Adjacent towns will soon be knocking at our doors for admission in order to secure the benefits to be derived from our never-failing supply of life-giving water, and Greater Los Angeles will become a magnificent reality." Any citizen voting against the aqueduct bonds, the *Times* warned on the day before the election, would be "placing himself in the attitude of an *enemy of the city*."

To oppose the Chandlers, in other words, was to oppose the perfection of Los Angeles, the expansion that was the city's imperial destiny. The false droughts and artful title transactions that brought Northern California water south are familiar stories in Los Angeles, and were made so in other parts of the country by the motion picture "Chinatown." Without Owens River water the San Fernando Valley could not have been developed. The San Fernando Valley was where Harrison Gray Otis and Harry Chandler, through two interlocking syndicates, the San Fernando Mis-



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sion Land Company and the Los Angeles Suburban Homes Company, happened to have bought or optioned—before the completion of the aqueduct, and in some cases before the aqueduct vote—almost sixty-five thousand acres (virtually the entire valley from what is now Burbank to what is now Tarzana) at strictly dry-land prices, between thirty-one and fifty-three dollars an acre. "Have a Contract for a Lot in your Pocket When the Big Bonds are Voted," the advertisements read in the *Times* during the days before the initial vote on the aqueduct bonds. "Pacoima Will Feel the First Benefits of the Owens River Water and Every Purchaser Investing Now Will Reap the Fruits of His Wisdom in Gratifying Profits."

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A great deal of Los Angeles as it appears today derived from this impulse to improve Chandler property. Union Station and the Los Angeles Civic Center and the curiosity known as Olvera Street (Olvera Street is part of El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park, but it was actually conceived, in 1926, as the first local theme mall, the theme being "Mexican marketplace") are where they are because Harry Chandler wanted to develop the north end of downtown, where the Times Building and many of his other downtown holdings lay. California has an aerospace industry today because Harry Chandler believed that the development of Los Angeles required that new industry be encouraged, and, in 1920, called on his friends to lend Donald Douglas fifteen thousand dollars to build an experimental torpedo plane.

The same year, Harry Chandler called on his friends to build Caltech and, the year after that, to build a facility (the Coliseum, near the University of Southern California) large enough to attract the 1932 Olympics. The Hollywood Bowl exists because Harry Chandler wanted it. The Los Angeles highway system exists because Harry Chandler knew that people would not buy land in his outlying subdivisions unless they could drive to them, and also because Harry Chandler sat on the local board of Goodyear Tire & Rubber, which by then had Los Angeles plants. Goodyear Tire & Rubber had Los Angeles plants in the first place because Harry Chandler and his friends made an investment of seven and a half million dollars to build them.

It was this total identification of the Chandler family's destiny with that of Los Angeles that made the *Times* so peculiar an institution, and also such a rich one. Under their corporate umbrella, the Times Mirror Company, the Chandlers now own, for all practical purposes, not only the *Times*, which for a number of years carried more full-run advertising linage than any other newspaper in the United States, but *Newsday*, New York *Newsday*, the Baltimore *Sun*, the Hartford *Courant*, the *National Journal*, nine specialized book- and educational publishing companies, seventeen specialized magazines, the CBS affiliates in Dallas and Austin, the ABC affiliate in St. Louis, the NBC affiliate in Birmingham, a cable-television business, and a company that exists exclusively to dispose of what had been Times Mirror's timber- and ranchland (this company, since it is meant to self-destruct, is described by Times Mirror as "entropic"): an empire with operating revenues for 1989 of three billion five hundred and seventeen million four hundred and ninety-three thousand dollars.

THE climate in which the *Times* prospered was a special one. Los Angeles has been, through the whole of its brief history, a boomtown. People who live here have tended to believe, and have been encouraged to do so by the increasingly fat newspaper dropped at their door every morning, that the trend would be unfailingly up. It seemed logical that the people who made business work in California should begin to desert San Francisco, which had been since the gold rush the financial center of the West, and look instead to Los Angeles, where the money increasingly was. It seemed logical that shipping should decline in San Francisco, one of the world's great natural ports, even as it flourished in Los Angeles, where a port had to be dredged and, at the insistence of the *Times* and Harry Chandler, was. It seemed logical that the wish to dredge this port should involve, since Los Angeles was originally landlocked, the annexation first of a twenty-mile corridor to the sea and then the "consolidation" with Los Angeles ("annexation" of one incorporated city by another was prohibited by state law) of two entire cities that lay on the Pacific, San Pedro and Wilmington.

The logic here was based on the declared imperative of unlimited opportunity, which, in turn, dictated unlimited growth. What was construed by people in the rest of the country as accidental—the sprawl of the city, the apparent absence of a cohesive center—was in fact purposeful, was the scheme itself: this would be a new kind of city, which would seem to have no finite limits, a literal cloud on the land that would eventually touch the Tehachapi range to the north and the Mexican border to the south, the San Bernardino Mountains to the east and the Pacific to the west; not just a city, finally, but its own nation—the Southland. That the Chandlers had been sufficiently prescient to buy up hundreds of thousands of acres on the far reaches of the expanding cloud—three hundred thousand acres spanning the Tehachapi, eight hundred and sixty thousand acres in Baja California, which Harrison Gray Otis and Harry Chandler were at one point trying to get the Taft Administration to annex from Mexico, thereby redefining even what might have seemed Southern California's one fixed border (the Pacific was seen locally not as a border but as an opportunity, a bridge to Hawaii and on to Asia)—was only what might be expected of any provident citizen: "The best interests of Los Angeles are paramount to the *Times*," Harry Chandler wrote in 1934, and it had been, historically, the *Times* that defined what those best interests were.

The *Times* under Harrison Gray Otis was a paper in which the owners' opponents were routinely described as "thieves," "scoundrels," "blackmailers," "venal," "cowardly," "mean," "un-American," "assassinlike," "petty," "despotic," and "anarchic scum." It was said of General Otis (he had been commissioned a brigadier general when he led an expeditionary force to the Philippines during the Spanish-American War, and he was General Otis forever after, just as his houses were the Bivouac and the Outpost, the Times Building was the Fortress, and the *Times* staff was the Phalanx) that he had a remarkably even temper—that of a hungry tiger. A libel suit or judgment against the paper was seen as neither a problem nor an embarrassment but a journalistic windfall, an opportunity to reprint the offending story, intact and often. In November of 1884, after the election of Grover Cleveland to the Presidency, the *Times* continued to maintain for eleven days that the President-elect was James G. Blaine, Harrison Gray Otis's candidate.

Even under Harry Chandler's son Norman, who was the publisher from 1944 until 1960, the *Times* continued to exhibit a fitful willfulness. The Los Angeles for which the *Times* was at that time published was still remote from the sources of national and international power, isolated not only geographically but developmentally, a deliberately adolescent city, intent on its own growth and not much interested in the world outside. In 1960, when Norman Chandler's son Otis was named publisher of the *Times*, the paper had only one foreign correspondent, based in Paris. Los Angeles was still run by a handful of men who worked for the banks and the old-line law firms downtown and drove home at five o'clock to Hancock Park or Pasadena or San Marino. They had lunch at the California Club or the Los Angeles Athletic Club. They held their weddings and funerals in Protestant or Catholic churches and did not, on the whole, know people who lived on the West Side, in Beverly Hills and Bel Air and Brentwood and Pacific Palisades, many of the most prominent of whom were in the entertainment business and were Jewish. As William Severns, the original general manager of the Los Angeles Music Center's operating company, put it in a recent interview with Patt Morrison of the *Times*, there was at that time a "big schism in society" between these downtown people and what he called "the movie group." The movie group, he said, "didn't even know where downtown was, except when they came downtown for a divorce." (This was in itself a cultural crossed connection, since people on the West Side generally got divorced not downtown but in Santa Monica.)

It was Norman Chandler's wife, Dorothy Buffum Chandler, called Buff, who perceived that it was in the interests of the city, and therefore of the *Times*, to draw the West Side into the power structure, and she saw the Music Center, for which she was then raising money, as a natural way to initiate this process. I once watched Mrs. Chandler, at a dinner sometime in 1964, trying to talk the late Jules Stein, the founder and at that time the chairman of MCA, into contributing twenty-five thousand dollars toward the construction of the Music Center. Jules Stein said that he would be glad to donate any amount to Mrs. Chandler's Music Center, and would then expect Mrs. Chandler to make a matching contribution—for this was the way things got done on the West Side—to the eye clinic he was then building at the U.C.L.A. Medical Center. "I can't do that," Mrs. Chandler said, and then she leaned across the table and demonstrated what the Chandlers had always seen as the true usefulness of owning a newspaper: "But I can give you twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of free publicity in the paper."

By the time Mrs. Chandler was through, the Music Center and one of its support groups, the Amazing Blue Ribbon, had become the common ground on which the West Side met

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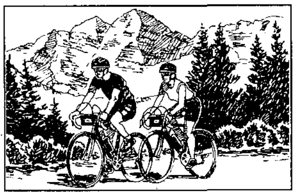

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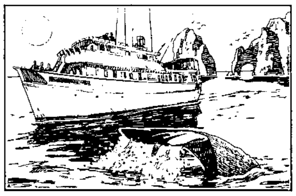

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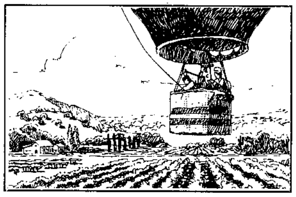

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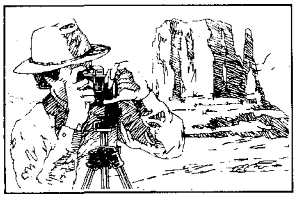

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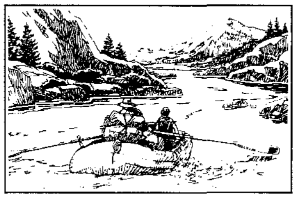

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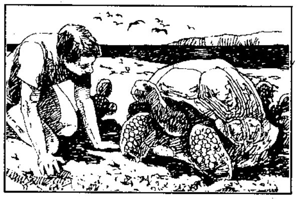

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downtown. This was not to say that all the top editors and managers at the *Times* were entirely comfortable on the West Side; many of them still tended to regard it as alien, a place where people exchanged too many social kisses and held novel, not to say dangerous, ideas. "I always enjoy visiting the West Side," I recall being told by Tom Johnson, who had become the publisher of the *Times* in 1980, when we happened to be seated next to each other at a party in Brentwood. He then took a notepad and a pen from his pocket. "I like to hear what people out here think." Nor was it to say that an occasional citizen of a more self-absorbed Los Angeles did not still surface, and even write querulous letters to the *Times:*

> Regarding "The Party Pace Picks Up During September" (by Jeannine Stein, Aug. 31): The social season in Los Angeles *starts the first Friday in October when the* Autumn Cotillion is held. This event, started over fifty years ago, brings together the socially prominent folks of Los Angeles who wouldn't be seen in Michael's and haven't yet decided if the opera is here to stay. By the time Cotillion comes around families are back from vacation, dove hunting season is just over and deer hunting season hasn't begun so the gentlemen of the city find no excuse not to attend. Following that comes the annual Assembly Ball and the Chevaliers du Tastevin dinner followed by the Las Madrinas Debutante Ball. If you are invited to these events you are in socially. No *nouveau riche* or publicity seekers nor social climbers need apply.

The *Times* in which this letter appeared, on September 10, 1989, was one that maintained six bureaus in Europe, five in Latin America, five in Asia, three in the Middle East, and two in Africa. It was reaching an area inhabited by thirteen or fourteen million people, more than half of whom, a recent Rand Corporation study suggests, had arrived in Los Angeles as adults, eighteen years old or over—citizens whose memories did not include the Las Madrinas Debutante Ball. In fact, there is in Los Angeles no memory everyone shares, no monument everyone knows, no historical reference as meaningful as the long sweep of the ramps where the San Diego and Santa Monica Freeways intersect, as the way the hard Santa Ana light strikes the palm trees against the white west wall of the Carnation Milk Building on Wilshire Boulevard. Mention of "historic" sites usually tends to signal a hustle under way—for example, transforming a commercial development into historic Olvera Street, or wrapping a twenty-story office tower and a four-hundred-room hotel around the historic Mann's Chinese Theatre, a featured part of the Hollywood Redevelopment Project. (The historic Mann's Chinese Theatre was originally Grauman's Chinese, but a significant percentage of the population has no reason to remember this.)

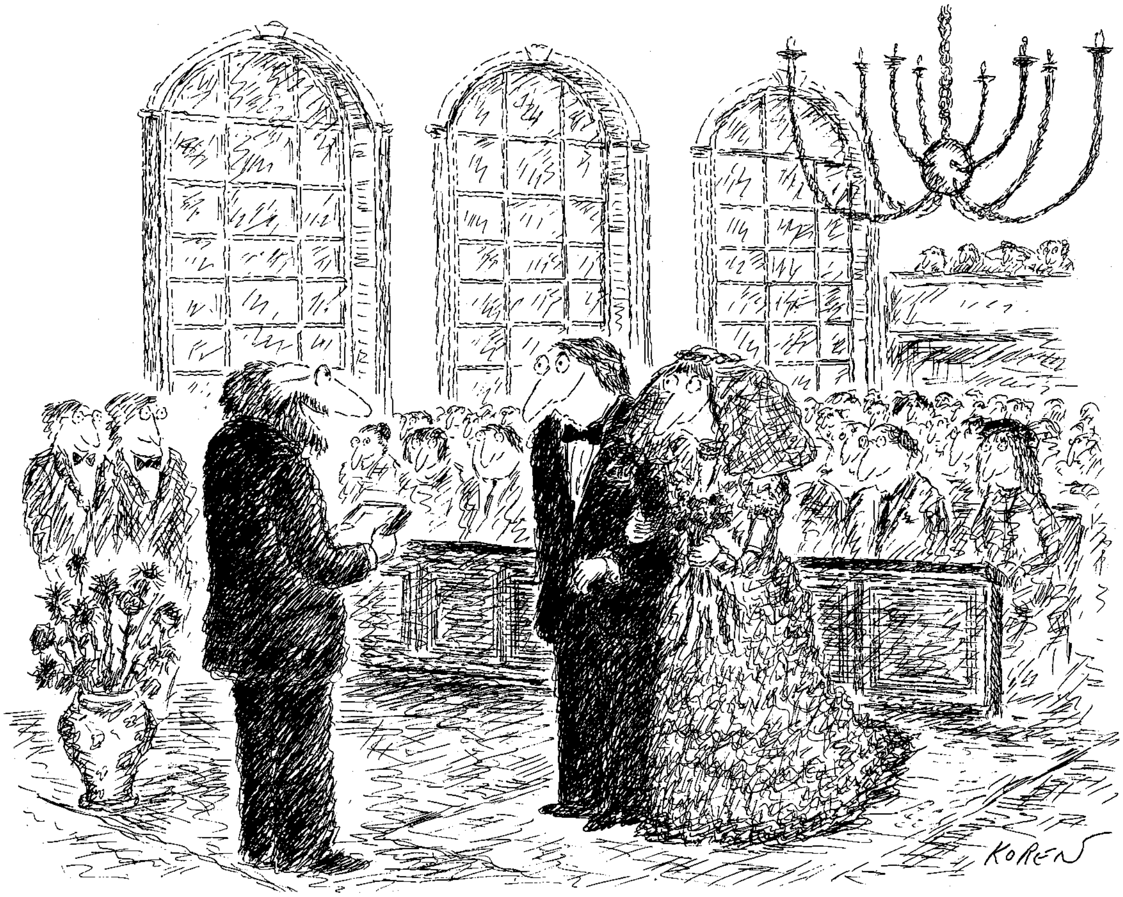
CALIFORNIANS until recently spoke of the United States beyond Colorado as "back East." If they went to New York, they went "back" to New York, a way of speaking that carried with it the suggestion of living on a distant frontier. Californians of my daughter's generation speak of going "out" to New York, a meaningful shift in the perception of one's place in the world. The Los Angeles that Norman and Buff Chandler's son Otis inherited in 1960—and, with his mother, proceeded over the next twenty years to reinvent—was, in other words, a new proposition, potentially a world-class city but still unformed, outgrowing its old controlling idea, its tropistic confidence in growth, and not yet seized by a new one. It was Otis Chandler who decided that what Los Angeles needed if it was to be a world-class city was a world-class newspaper, and he set out to get one.

Partly in response to the question of what a daily newspaper could do that television could not do better, and partly in response to geography—papers on the West Coast have a three-hour advantage going to press and a three-hour disadvantage when they come off the press—Otis Chandler, then thirty-two, decided that the *Times* should be what was sometimes called a daily magazine: a newspaper that would cover breaking news competitively but remain willing to commit enormous resources to providing a kind of analysis and background no one else was providing. He made it clear at the outset that the paper was no longer his father's but his, antagonizing members of his own family in 1961 by running a five-part report on the John Birch Society, of which his aunt and uncle Alberta and Philip Chandler were influential members. Otis Chandler followed up the John Birch series, in case anyone had missed the point, by signing the Chandler name to a front-page editorial opposing Birch activities. "His legs bestrid the ocean, his reared arm crested the world," as the brass letters read (for no clear reason, since it is what Cleopatra says about Antony as the asps are about to arrive in the fifth act of "Antony and Cleopatra") at the base of the turning globe in the lobby of the Times Building. "His voice was propertied to all the tuned spheres." One reason Otis Chandler could property the voice of the *Times* to all the tuned spheres was that his *Times* continued to make more money than his father's. "The paper was published every day and they could see it," he later said about his family. "They disagreed endlessly with my editorial policies. But they never disagreed with the financial results."

In fact, an unusual kind of reporting developed at the *Times*, the editorial philosophy of which was frequently said to be "Run it long and run it once." The *Times* became a paper on which reporters were allowed, even encouraged, to give the reader the kind of detail that was known to everyone on the scene but rarely got filed. On the night Son of Sam was arrested in New York, according to Charles T. Powers, then in the *Times'* New York bureau, Roone Arledge was walking around Police Headquarters, "dressed as if for a touch football game, a glass of scotch in one hand, a portable two-way radio in the other, directing his network's feed to the Coast," details that gave the reader pretty much all there was to know about celebrity police work. In San Salvador in the early spring of 1982, when representatives from the centrist Christian Democrats, the militarist National Conciliation Party, and the rightist ARENA were all meeting under a pito tree on Francisco (Chachi) Guerrero's patio, Laurie Becklund, of the *Times*, asked Guerrero, who has since been assassinated, how people so opposed to one another could possibly work together. "We all know each other—we've known each other for years," he said. "You underestimate our *política tropical.*" A few days later, when Laurie Becklund asked an ARENA leader why ARENA, then trying to close out the Christian Democrats, did not fear losing American aid, the answer she got, and filed, summed up the entire relationship between the United States and the Salvadoran right: "We believe in gringos."

This kind of detail was sometimes

dismissed by reporters at other papers as "L.A. color," but really it was something different: the details gave the tone of the situation, the subtext without which the text could not be understood, and sharing this subtext with the reader was the natural tendency of reporters who, because of the nature of both the paper on which they worked and the city in which it was published, tended not to think of themselves as insiders. "Jesse don't wanna run nothing but his mouth," Mayor Marion Barry, of Washington, D.C., was quoted as having said a few weeks ago in a piece by Bella Stumbo in the Los Angeles *Times;* there was in this piece, I was told in New York after both the New York *Times* and the Washington *Post* had been forced to report the ensuing controversy, nothing that many *Post* and New York *Times* reporters in Washington did not already know. That was presumably true, but only the Los Angeles *Times* had printed it.



"And, finally, do you, Don, or do you, Allison, have a problem with any of this?"

Unconventional choices were made at the *Times*. Otis Chandler had insisted that the best people in the country be courted and hired, regardless of their politics. The political cartoonist Paul Conrad was lured from the Denver *Post*—brought out for an interview and met at the airport, per his demand, by the editor of the paper. Robert Scheer, who had a considerable reputation as a political journalist at *Ramparts* and *New Times* but no newspaper experience, was not only hired but given whatever he wanted, including the use of the executive dining room, the Picasso Room. "For the money we're paying Scheer, I should hope he'd be abrasive," William Thomas, the editor of the *Times* from 1971 until 1989, said to a network executive who called to complain that Scheer had been abrasive in an interview. The *Times* had by then abandoned traditional ideas of what newspaper reporters and editors should be paid, and was in some cases paying double the going rate. "I don't think newspapers should take a back seat to magazines, TV, or public relations," Otis Chandler had said early on. He had bought the *Times* a high-visibility Washington bureau. He had bought the *Times* a foreign staff.

By 1980, when Otis Chandler named Tom Johnson publisher of the *Times* and created for himself the new title of editor-in-chief, the *Times* was carrying, in the average week, more columns of news than either the New York *Times* or the Washington *Post*. It was running long, analytical background pieces from parts of the country and of the world that other papers left to the wires. Its Washington bureau, even Bob Woodward of the Washington *Post* conceded recently, was frequently beating the *Post*. Its foreign coverage, particularly from Central America and the Middle East, was, day for day, stronger than that of the national competition. "Otis was a little more specific than just indicating he wanted the *Times* to be among the top U.S. newspapers," Nick Williams, the editor of the *Times* from 1958 until 1971, said later of Otis Chandler's ascension to publisher. "He said, 'I want it to be the number-one newspaper in the country.' " What began worrying people in Los Angeles this fall, starting on the Sunday morning in October when the *Times* unveiled the first issue of what it referred to on billboards and television advertisements and radio spots and bus shelters and bus tails and rack cards and in-paper advertisements, and even in its own house newsletter, as "the new, faster-format Los Angeles *Times*," was whether having the number-one newspaper in the country was a luxury the Chandlers, and the city, could still afford.

• •

IT was hard, this past fall at the *Times*, to sort out exactly what was going on. A series of shoes had already been dropped. There had been in January of 1989 the installation of a new editor, someone from outside, someone whose particular depths and shallows

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many people had trouble sounding, someone from the East (actually, he was from Tennessee, but his basic training had been at the Washington *Post* under Benjamin Bradlee, and around the *Times* he continued to be referred to, tellingly, as an Easterner)—Shelby Coffey III. There had been some months later the announcement of a new approach to what had become the *Times'* Orange County problem, the problem being that, a few miles to the south, in Orange County, the *Times'* zoned edition had so far been unable to unseat the Orange County *Register*, the leading paper in a market so rich that the *Register* had a few years earlier become the one paper in the United States with more full-run advertising linage than the *Times*.

d.ehrenberg

The new approach to this Orange County problem seemed straightforward enough—the editor of the Orange County edition, at that time Narda Zacchino, would get twenty-nine additional reporters, an expanded plant, and virtual autonomy over what appeared in the *Times* in Orange County, and would report only to Shelby Coffey—although it did involve a new "president," or business person, for Orange County, Lawrence M. Higby, whose particular skills (he was a marketing expert out of Taco Bell, Pepsi, and H. R. Haldeman's office in the Nixon White House, where he had been known as Haldeman's Haldeman) made some people uneasy. Narda Zacchino was liked and respected around the *Times* (she had more or less grown up on the paper, and was married to Robert Scheer), but Higby was an unknown quantity, and there were intimations that not everyone was entirely comfortable with these heightened stakes in Orange County. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Tom Johnson, the publisher, said in an August talk to the Washington bureau that the decision to give Narda Zacchino and Lawrence Higby autonomy in Orange County had led to "blood all over the floor" in Los Angeles. He described the situation in Orange County as "a failure of mine," an area in which "I should have done more sooner."

Still, it was September before people outside the *Times* started noticing the blood, or even the dropped shoes, already on the floor. September was when it was announced, quite unexpectedly, that Tom Johnson, who had been Otis Chandler's own choice as publisher and had, in turn, picked Shelby Coffey as editor, was moving upstairs to what were described as "broader responsibilities"—for example, newsprint supply. The publisher's office, it was explained, would now be occupied by David Laventhol, who had spent time at the New York *Herald Tribune* and the Washington *Post*, had moved next to *Newsday* (he was editor, then publisher), since 1987 had been the president of the parent Times Mirror Company, and had achieved, mainly because he was seen to have beat the New York *Times* in Queens with New York *Newsday*, a certain reputation for knowing how to run the kind of regional war the Los Angeles *Times* wanted to run in Orange County. David Laventhol, like Shelby Coffey, was referred to around the office as an Easterner.

Then, on October 11th, there was the format change, to which many of the paper's most vocal readers, a significant number of whom had been comparing the paper favorably every morning with the national edition of the New York *Times*, reacted negatively. It appeared that some readers did not want color photographs on the front page of the Los Angeles *Times*. Nor, it appeared, did these readers want news highlights or news briefs or boxes summarizing the background of a story in three or four sentences without dependent clauses. A Laguna Niguel subscriber described himself in a letter to the editor as "heartsick." A Temple City reader characterized the changes as "beyond my sense of belief." By the first of December, even the student newspaper at Caltech, the *California Tech*, was having a little fun at the *Times'* expense, calling itself the "New, Faster Format *Tech*" and declaring itself dedicated to "increasing the amount of information on the front page by replacing all stories with pictures." In the lost-and-found classified section of the *Times* itself there appeared, among pleas for lost Akitas ("Has tattoo") and lost Saudi Arabian Airlines I.D. cards and lost four-carat emerald-cut diamond rings set in platinum (“sentimental value”), this notice, apparently placed by a group of the *Times*’ own reporters: “LA TIMES: Last seen in a confused state disguised as USA Today. If found, please return to Times Mirror Square.”

The words “*USA Today*” were heard quite a bit during the first few months of the new, faster format, as were “New Coke” and “Michael Dukakis.” It was said that Shelby Coffey and David Laventhol had turned the paper over to its marketing people. It was said that the marketing people were bent on reducing the paper to its zoned editions, especially its Orange County edition, and reducing the zoned editions to a collection of suburban shoppers. It was said that the paper was conducting a deliberate dumbdown, turning itself over to the interests and whims (less to read, more local service announcements) of the several thousand people who had taken part in the videotaped focus groups the marketing people and key editors had been running in Orange County. A new format for a newspaper or magazine tends inevitably to suggest a perceived problem with the previous product, and the insistence with which this particular new format was promoted—the advertising stressed the superior disposability of the new *Times*, how easy it was to read, how cut down, how little time the reader need spend with it—convinced many people that the paper was determined to be less than it had been. “READ THIS,” *Times* rack cards now demanded. “QUICK.”

The architects of the new, faster format became, predictably, defensive, even impatient. People with doubts were increasingly seen as balky, resistant to all change, sulky dogs in the manger of progress. “Just look at this,” Narda Zacchino, who, as editor of the Orange County edition, had been one of the central figures in the redesign, ordered me, brandishing first a copy of that morning’s *USA Today* and then one of that morning’s *Times*. “Do they look alike? No. They look nothing alike. I know there’s been a negative response from within the paper. ‘This is *USA Today*,’ you hear. Well, look at it. It’s not *USA Today*. But we’re a newspaper. We want people to read the newspaper. I’ve been struggling down there for seven years, trying to get people to read the paper. And, despite the in-house criticism, we’re not getting criticism from outside. Our response has been very, very good.”

Shelby Coffey mentioned the redesign that Walter Bernard had done in 1977 for Henry Anatole Grunwald at *Time*. “They got scorched,” he said. “They had thousands of letters, cancellations by the hundreds. I remember seeing it the first time and being jarred. In fact, I thought they had lost their senses. They had gone to color. They had done the departments and the type in quite a different way. But it stood up over the years as one of the most successful, maybe *the* most successful, of the redesigns. I think you have to accept as a given that it’s going to take six months or a year before people get used to this.”

Around the paper, where it was understood that the format change originally had been developed in response to the needs of the Orange County edition, a certain paranoia had taken hold. People were exchanging rumors by computer mail. People were debating whether the Orange County edition should be encouraged to run announcements of local events in column one of page one (“Tonight: Tito Puente brings his Latin Jazz All-Stars to San Juan Capistrano. . . . Puente, a giant among salsa musicians, is a particular favorite at New York’s celebrated Blue Note nightclub. Time: 8 p.m., at the Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano. Tickets: $19.50. Information: 714 496-8930”) and still call itself the Los Angeles *Times*. People were noticing that the Orange County edition was, as far as that went, not always calling itself the Los Angeles *Times*—that some of its subscription callers were urging telephone contacts to subscribe to “the Orange County *Times*.” People were tormenting one another with various forms of the verb “to drive,” as in “market-driven” and “customer-driven” and “A lot of people are calling this paper market-driven but it’s not, what drives this paper is editorial” and “This paper has different forces driving it than something like *The Nation*.” (The necessity for distinguishing the Los Angeles *Times* from *The Nation* was perhaps the most arresting but far from the only straw point made to me in the course of a few days at the *Times*.)

The mood was rendered no less febrile by what began to seem an unusual number of personnel changes. During the first few days of November, the Los Angeles *Herald Examiner* folded, and a visible number of its columnists and its sports and arts and entertainment writers began appearing immediately in the *Times*. A week or so later, Dennis Britton, who had been, with Shelby Coffey and two other editors, a final contender for the editorship of the *Times* (the four candidates had been asked by Tom Johnson to submit written analyses of the content of the *Times* and of the areas in which it needed strengthening), bailed out as one of the *Times*’ deputy managing editors, accepting the editorship of the Chicago *Sun-Times*.

A week after that, it was announced that Anthony Day, the editor of the *Times* editorial pages since 1971, would be replaced by Thomas Plate, who had directed the partly autonomous editorial and Op-Ed pages for New York *Newsday* and was expected to play a role in doing something similar for Orange County. In the fever of the moment, it was easy for some people to believe that the changes were all of a piece—that, for example, Anthony Day’s leaving the editorial pages had something to do with the new fast read, or with the fact that some people on the Times Mirror board had occasionally expressed dissatisfaction with the paper’s editorial direction on certain issues, particularly its strong anti-Administration stand on Central American policy. Anthony Day was told only, he reported, that it was “time for a change,” and that he would be made a reporter and assigned a beat—“ideas and ideology in the modern world”—and would report directly to Shelby Coffey. “There was this strange, and strangely moving, party for Tony last Saturday at which Tom Johnson spoke,” a friend at the *Times* wrote me not long after Day was fired. “And they sang songs to Tony—among them a version of ‘Yesterday’ in which the words were changed to

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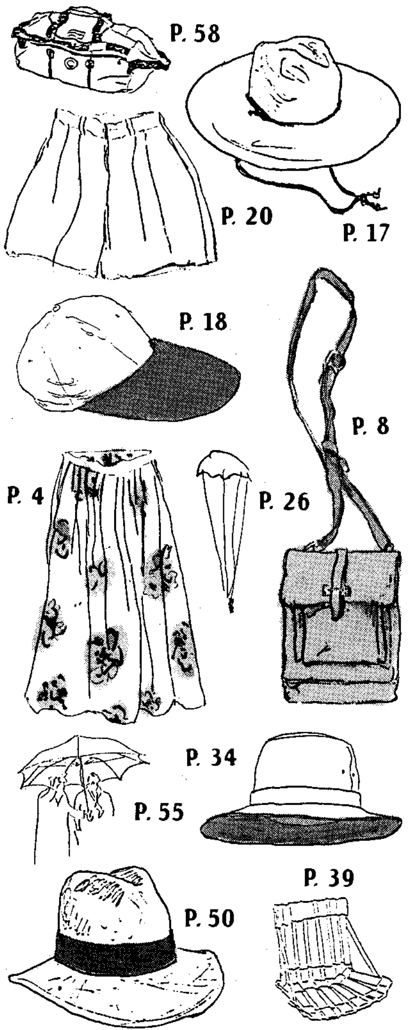

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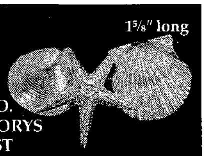

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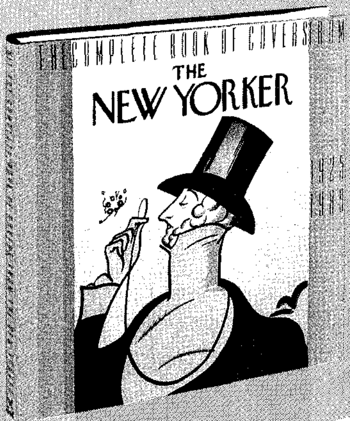
'Tonyday.' ('Why he had to go, we don't know, they wouldn't say.')"

Part of the problem, as some people at the *Times* saw it, was that neither Shelby Coffey nor David Laventhol shared much history with anybody at the *Times*. Shelby Coffey was viewed by many people at the *Times* as virtually unfathomable. He seemed to place mysterious demands upon himself. His manner, which was essentially border Southern, was unfamiliar in Los Angeles. His wife, Mary Lee, was for many people at the *Times* equally hard to place: a delicate Southerner who looked like a lifetime Maid of Cotton but was in fact a doctor, and not even a gynecologist or a pediatrician but a trauma specialist, operating out of one of the few trauma centers left in Los Angeles County—at Huntington Hospital, in Pasadena. "You know the golden rule of the emergency room," Mary Lee Coffey drawled the first time I met her, shortly after her arrival in Los Angeles. She was wearing a white angora sweater. "Keep 'em alive till eight-oh-five."

Together, Shelby Coffey and David Laventhol, a demonstrated corporate player, suggested a new mood at the *Times*, a little leaner and maybe a little meaner, a little more market-oriented. "Since 1881, the Los Angeles *Times* has led the way with award-winning journalism," a recent *Times* help-wanted advertisement read. "As we progress into our second century, we're positioned as one of America's largest newspapers. To help us maintain our leadership position, we're currently seeking a Promotion Writer." Some people in the newsroom began referring to Coffey and Laventhol as the First Street Gangster Crips (the Gangster Crips are a prominent Los Angeles gang, and the Times Building is on First Street) and to their changes as drive-bys. They were repeatedly referred to as "guys whose ties are all in Washington or New York," as "people with Eastern ideas of what Los Angeles wants or deserves." Shelby Coffey's new editors were called "the Stepford Wives," and Shelby Coffey himself was called, to his face, "the Dan Quayle of journalism." (That this was said by a reporter employed to this day by the *Times* suggests not only the essentially tolerant nature of the paper but the extent to which Coffey appears dedicated to the accommodation of dissent.) Before Christmas, a blowup of his photograph, with a Santa hat pinned above it, appeared in one of the departments at the *Times*. "He Knows When You Are Sleeping," the legend read. "And with Whom."

This question of Coffey and Laventhol being "Easterners" was never far below the surface. "Easterner," as the word is used in Los Angeles, remains somewhat harder to translate than "First Street Gangster Crip." It carries both an arrogance and a defensiveness, and has to do not exactly with geography (people who themselves came from the East will quite often dismiss other people as "Easterners") but with a virtually uncrackable complex of attitudes. In the local view, an Easterner believes that Los Angeles begins and ends on the West Side and is about the movie business. Easterners, moreover, do not understand even the movie business: they come out in January and get taken to dinner at Spago and complain that the view is obscured by billboards, by advertisements for motion pictures, missing the point that advertisements for motion pictures are the most comforting possible view for those people who regularly get window tables at Spago. Easterners refer to Los Angeles as El Lay, as La-La Land, as the Left Coast. "I suppose you're glad to be here," Easterners say to Californians they run into in New York. "I suppose you can always read the *Times* here," Easterners say on their January visits to Los Angeles, meaning the New York *Times*.

Easterners see the Los Angeles *Times* only rarely, and, when they do see it, complain about the length of its pieces. "They can only improve it," an editor of the New York *Times* recently said to me when I referred to the changes that the Los Angeles *Times* had undertaken. He said that in the past the paper had been "unreadable." It was, he said, "all gray." I asked what he meant. "It's these stories that cover whole pages," he said. "And then the story breaks to the next page and keeps going." That was said on a day when, of eight stories on the front page of the New York *Times*, seven broke to other sections. "Who back East cares?" I was asked by someone at the Los Angeles *Times* when I said that I was writing about the changes at the paper. "If this were happening to



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the New York *Times*, you'd have the Washington *Post* all over it."

THE END

Not every man knows what he shall sing at the end,
Watching the pier as the ship sails away, or what it will seem like
When he's held by the sea's roar, motionless, there at the end,
Or what he shall hope for once it is clear that he'll never go back.

When the time has passed to prune the rose or caress the cat, when
The sunset torching the lawn and the full moon icing it down
No longer appear, not every man knows what he'll discover instead.
When the weight of the past leans against nothing, and the sky

Is no more than remembered light, and the stories of cirrus
And cumulus come to a close, and all the birds are suspended in flight,
Not every man knows what is waiting for him, or what he shall sing
When the ship he is on slips into darkness, there at the end.

—Mark Strand

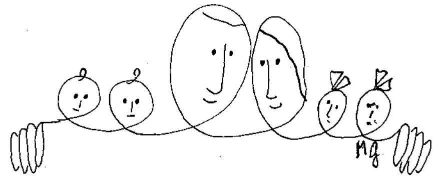
• •

WHEN people in Los Angeles talked about what was happening at the *Times*, they were talking about something harder to define, in the end, than any real or perceived or feared changes in the paper itself, which was looking good. Day for day, not much about the *Times* had actually changed. There sometimes seemed to be fewer of the analytic national pieces that used to appear in column one. There seemed to be some increase in syndicated soft features, picked up with the columnists and the arts reviewers when the *Herald Examiner* folded. But "the new, faster-format Los Angeles *Times*" (or, as early advertisements called it, "the new, fast-read Los Angeles *Times*") still carried more words every day than appear in the New Testament. It still carried in the average week more columns of news than the New York *Times* or the Washington *Post*. It still ran pieces at a length few other papers would countenance—David Shaw's January series on the coverage of the McMartin child-abuse case, for example, ran seventeen thousand words. The paper's editorials were just as strong under Thomas Plate as they had been under Anthony Day. Its reporters were still filing stories full of details that did not appear in other papers—for example, the fact (this was from Kenneth Freed in Panama, January 1, 1990) that nearly a hundred and twenty-five journalists, after spending less than twelve hours in Panama without leaving Howard Air Base, where they were informed that there was shooting in the streets of Panama City ("It is war out there," the briefing officer told them), had accepted the Southern Command's offer of a charter flight back to Miami.

The *Times* had begun, moreover, to do aggressive local coverage, not historically the paper's strong point, and also to do frequent "special reports"—eight-to-fourteen-page sections, with no advertising, offering wrap-up newsmagazine coverage of, say, China, or Eastern Europe, or the October Northern California earthquake, or the state of the environment in Southern California. A week or so before Christmas, Shelby Coffey initiated a daily "Moscow edition," a six-to-eight-page selection of stories from that day's Los Angeles *Times*. This Moscow edition, which was prepared in Los Angeles, faxed to the *Times* bureau in Moscow, and delivered by hand to some hundred and twenty-five Soviet officials, turned out to be sufficiently popular so that the Moscow bureau received a call from the Soviet Foreign Ministry requesting that the *Times* extend its publication to weekends, and even to Christmas Day.

"Shelby may be fighting more of a fight against the dumbing-down of the newspaper than we know or he can say," one *Times* editor, who had himself been wary of the changes under way but now believed that there had been among some members of the staff an unjustified rush to judgment, said recently. "That the *Times* is still essentially the same paper seems to me so plainly the case as to refute the word 'new' in 'the new, faster-format Los Angeles *Times*.' What small novelty there is would have received very little promotion had it begun as a routine editorial modification. But it didn't originate in editorial discussion. It originated in market research, which was why it got promoted so heavily. The *Times* needed a way to declare Orange County a new ballgame, and this was it. But you can't change the paper anywhere without changing it everywhere. And once the *Times* throws the switch a colossal amount of current seems to flow through the whole system."

In a way, the uneasiness had to do with the entire difficult question of "Easterners." It was not that Shelby Coffey was an Easterner or that David Laventhol was an Easterner but that Easterners had been brought in, that there was no Chandler in the publisher's office, no one to whom the Los Angeles *Times* was intrinsically more important than, say, *Newsday*, no one who could be reliably expected to have a visceral appreciation not just of how far the *Times* had come but of how far Los Angeles itself had come, of how fragile the idea of the place was and how easily it could be lost. Los Angeles had been the most idealized of American cities, and the least accidental. Its development had proceeded not from the circumstances of geography but from sheer will, from an idea. It had been General Otis and Harry Chandler who conceived the future of Los Angeles as one of ever-expanding possibility, and had instructed the readers of the *Times* in what was needed to achieve that future. It had been Otis Chandler who articulated this vision by defining the *Times*' sphere of influence as regional, from Santa Barbara to the border and from the mountains to the sea, and who told the readers of the *Times* that this was what they wanted.



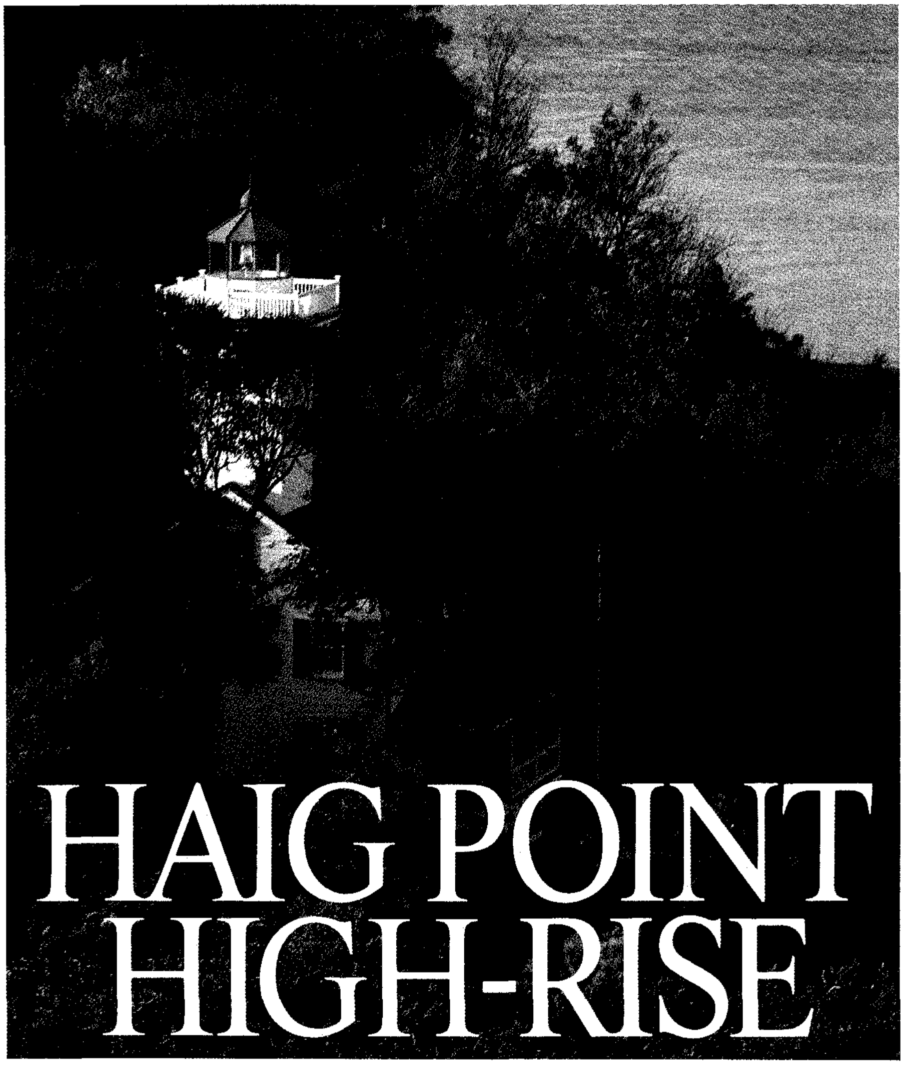
What the *Times* seemed to be telling its readers now was significantly different, and was based not on the logic of infinite opportunity proceeding from infinite growth but on the logic of minimizing risk, on corporate logic, and it was not impossible to follow that logic to a point at which what might be best for the *Times* and what might be best for Los Angeles would no longer necessarily coincide. "You talk to people in Orange County, they don't want news of Los Angeles," David Laventhol said one afternoon in late November. "We did a survey. Ask them what news they want, news from Los Angeles rates very, very low."

We were talking about his sense that Southern California was fragmenting more than it was coalescing, about what one *Times* editor had called "the aggressive disidentification with Los Angeles" of the more recent and more uniformly affluent communities in Ventura and San Diego and Orange Counties. This aggressive disidentification with Los Angeles was the reason the Orange County edition had been made autonomous.

"I spent many years in the New York market, and in some ways this is a more complex market," David Laventhol said. "The New York *Times* and some other papers were traditionally able to connect the entire New York community. It's much tougher here. If anything could bind this whole place together—anything that's important, anything beyond baseball teams—it would probably be the *Times*. But people are looking inward right now. They aren't thinking in terms of the whole region. It's partly a function of transportation, jobs, the difficulty of commuting, or whatever, but it's also a function of life style. People in Orange County don't like the West Side of Los Angeles. They don't like the South Side of Los Angeles. They don't like whatever. They're lined up at the county line with their backs to Los Angeles."

Some years ago, Otis Chandler was asked how many readers would actually miss the *Times* were it to stop publishing tomorrow. "Probably less than half," Otis Chandler had said, and was so quoted in his own paper. For reasons that might not have been clear to his market-research people, he had nonetheless continued trying to make that paper the best in the country. This past Christmas, there was at the *Times*, as there has always been, a party, and a Christmas toast was given, as it has always been, by the publisher. In the past, the publishers of the *Times* have stressed the growth of the enterprise, both achieved and anticipated. It had been a good year, David Laventhol said at this year's Christmas party, and he was glad it was over.

—JOAN DIDION



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THE THEATRE

Portrait of the Artist on the Wane

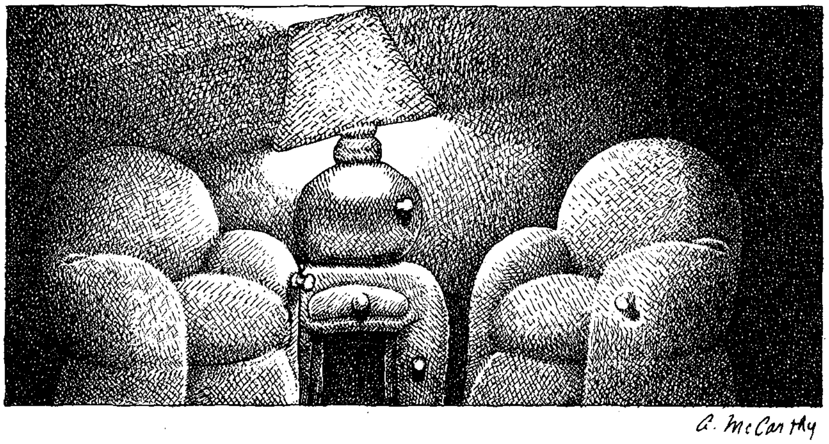
ISADORA DUNCAN is the heroine of Martin Sherman's "When She Danced," and when she danced was in the twenties in the Soviet Union and for years before and after that all over the world. She never set foot on the stage of Playwrights Horizons, and that we accept her there at once as a great star is just one of Mr. Sherman's many accomplishments in this remarkable play, to say nothing of those of Elizabeth Ashley, whose performance in the role is always credible—often for what she doesn't do as much as for what she does. There's nothing fake.

The action takes place in 1923 in the living room of a house in Paris, where Isadora—at the end of her career, although she doesn't know it—is living with her Russian husband, a poet named Sergei, and planning recitals to raise money for a school of dance. Because she enthusiastically joined the Communists in Moscow, draping herself in the Russian flag on many public occasions, she has become persona non grata in most European cities, and probably in most American ones, too. We first see her, early in the morning, draped in Sergei's arms on a chaise longue and trying, without much success, to get disentangled. She can't even wake him until they both hit the floor. He is an extremely handsome, extremely surly young fellow, who speaks only Russian. His pantomime is perforce vivid, and it's often funny, especially when used as a weapon against Isadora's manager, a woman named Mary, who doubles when needed as a masseuse; she is certainly needed this morning. Among the other monolinguists who gather are a French maid and an Italian businessman; there is also a multilingual young Greek pianist and a modest, quiet young woman, mysterious at first, called Miss Belzer, who (in a lovely performance by Marcia Jean Kurtz) turns out to be a Russian interpreter. At one point, Isadora starts to compose a dance in her head; her face lights up, and she becomes transfixed; the interpreter, who eighteen years before saw Isadora dance in St. Petersburg, starts to weep. This small incident is just one instance of the playwright's subtle, telling indirection.

Most of the time, the stage is alive with good humor, but there is desperation, too, and sadness. A table is brought in and a lavish banquet set up, but then some men arrive and roughly remove the furniture, breaking a treasured plate as they do so. Sergei, with appropriate histrionics, recites one of his poems, which contains references to Isadora's children, drowned some years before in an accident, and thus reduces her to near-collapse. (This episode is the only one that seemed to me extraneous—tinged with research.) What almost finishes her, though, is the entrance, near the end, of a Swedish girl, who proceeds, scarves aloft, to do an Isadora dance. Piercing screams from the begetter.

There is considerable activity, and yet through it all a story is told. The cast, under the acute direction of Tim Luscombe, is impeccable. Besides the actors I've mentioned, there is Jonathan Walker as Sergei, Robert Sean Leonard as the Greek pianist, Robert Dorfman as the Italian schlemiel (the sobriquet is the Greek's), Marcia Lewis as Isadora's manager, Jacqueline Bertrand as the maid, and Clea Montville as the prancing Swede. The good setting, costumes, and lighting were designed by Steven Rubin, Jess Goldstein, and Nancy Schertler.

INFLATION



ERIC BOGOSIAN is an incomparable mimic and, in his "Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll," a way beyond comparable actor. This one-man show, at the Orpheum, amounts to an inventory of ethical discards—a fake British rock star, a two-timing businessman, a nasty subway panhandler, all manner of braggarts and hypocrites and others either foolish or awful—whom Mr. Bogosian evokes with humor and with irony that pierces to their shrivelled souls. True satire continues to be rare and precious in the theatre. That the effect of "Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll" is anything but bleak is because of Mr. Bogosian's wit and wild imagination. The show is continuously funny, and, odd to say, the characters and the private hell they inhabit seem to vanish as soon as the houselights go up.

ESTELLE PARSONS returns, stronger than ever, in yet another revival of "Miss Margarida's Way," which was written and directed by the Brazilian dramatist Roberto Athayde. The play almost amounts to another solo turn. Miss Margarida is an eighth-grade teacher in a public school that could be anywhere; we, the audience, are her pupils, along with one young actor, who mounts to the stage from time to time to stare at her. What she says is so racy and bossy and peculiar that she is well worth staring at. Seeing the play again, after thirteen years, I could still remember the slow chill that crept over me when I realized that what seems at first to be comical eccentricity is actually madness—that there is danger here. A colleague, a few seats away, murmured something about "political metaphor," and I thought, Oh Lord, I've missed it again, being allegory-proof. After the performance I saw, however, Miss Parsons invited Mr. Athayde to the stage, and he spoke briefly about dictatorships in South America, leaving no doubt of his intentions. As for Miss Parsons' acting, it has such depth and intensity that she could almost be said to be possessed by the role. Almost, but not quite: when taking her bows at the end, she again was her poised and charming self, grin intact. —EDITH OLIVER

Worlds Apart

"IMAGINING BRAD," which the Circle Rep is producing at the Players Theatre, is a perfectly hateful play, by Peter Hedges, that offers as an image of the perfect husband a virtually blind man with no arms or legs and very little hair, a not very nice skin condition, cauliflower ears, and hideous wartlike bumps where his elbows should be. Mr. Hedges' notion is that since men are a bad lot and women have such a tough time of it, a girl is really best off married to him who lacks the usual number of limbs to hit her and kick her with. This in itself might not be so offensive were Mr. Hedges merely stating his views or channelling them into the punch line to a joke, but "Imagining Brad" requires two playlets and an hour and twenty minutes to get to its point, during which time one is trapped in the Players, unable to leave, because there's no intermission. The first playlet, entitled "The Valerie of Now," consists of Melissa Joan Hart doing a spiel as a twelve-year-old girl coming to terms with her first menstrual period. The title playlet, which follows, consists of a series of conversations between Valerie now grown up and smugly portrayed by Erin Cressida Wilson—the program identifies her only as Brad's Wife (get it?)—and a stock Nashville housewife (Sharon Ernster). Both women claim to be happily married, and Mr. Hedges' method consists in the gradual revelation of Brad's condition and the subsequent revelation that the other woman is a battered wife.

Why the first playlet at all? Why share with us the anxious hopes and joys and fears of girl-becoming-woman? Presumably, to add to the cruel irony in store for us when we learn what happened right after that poignant little scene: how Valerie's father chose the occasion of her twelfth birthday to embark on a long career of sexual and physical abuse, which explains why she is quite contented living with a lump of foul deformity like Brad.

Few things in a theatre, in my experience, are more embarrassing than the spectacle of a pretentious male writer waxing meaningful on the subject of menstruation. "Imagining Brad," which was directed by Joe Mantello, goes beyond mere discomfiture. It made my two companions (one male, one female) so angry they wanted to burn down the theatre. (The play, they said, changed their perception of nothing except government subsidy of the arts.) What makes "Imagining Brad" so creepy is the play's suggestion that men should be reduced to helpless, dependent appreciators of their wives, because that is what a woman wants: "Emasculating Brad" would be more to the point.

BY contrast, Richard Nelson's "Some Americans Abroad," which the Lincoln Center Theatre is producing at the Mitzi E. Newhouse, is a quiet, low-key comedy of manners about a group of literature professors on their department's annual theatre tour of England. It has very little plot and no overt message—at any rate, not one that you could fit onto a postcard or into a cable to a friend (like the telegraphed message in "Imagining Brad"). Its subject is American self-hatred and Anglophilia.

Knowing that Nelson's play had wildly pleased British audiences, and having not much admired his "Principia Scriptoriae," I approached "Some Americans Abroad" with trepidation, fearing that the play might take as its easy target the phenomenon of the Ugly American. But Nelson's characters themselves hate Ugly Americans: indeed, they seem to hate all Americans—including, to a large degree, each other. They claim English literature as their special province without really seeming to understand it. They love Wordsworth and Henry James (of course), but they haven't much sympathy with Milton. Guardians of taste and higher learning, they worry about whether or not this or that idea is "publishable"—the way lawyers talk about something being "billable"—and say things to each other like "I understand you like fiction" or "I don't have much time for fiction myself," as though all books, like all Americans, were the same. Listening to these people hold forth—they interrupt and talk across each other on such subjects as disarmament, capital punishment, the merits of Shaw, and the

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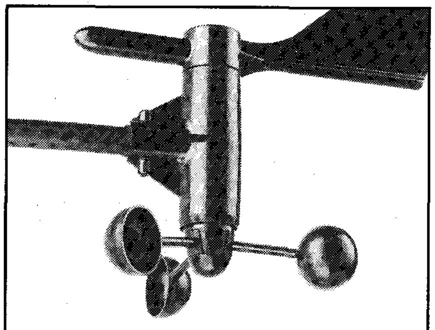

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quality of their theatre seats—and noting their habits of gesture and mannerism, thinking and behavior, and, especially, growing familiar with their literary-guidebook view of England, one sees the utter pointlessness of their journey.

Remorselessly well observed—and funny, in spite of the gentle level of the satire—Nelson's play is a little difficult to place generically. Though lacking a plot structure per se, it has elements of some of the very sorts of play that the characters in "Some Americans Abroad" must be lapping up, and that the English themselves are raised on: sophisticated academic comedies that entertain an audience with witticisms about university politics and lead elegantly up to soft revelations about who is sleeping with whom. (One thinks primarily of Simon Gray.) The first act centers on the fate of an untenured professor, Henry (Bob Balaban), who, as everyone except him seems to know, has been replaced for the coming year, and the second act on a charge of sexual harassment levelled at one of the professors, Philip (John Bedford Lloyd), by a truant student (Elisabeth Shue) who wants to cover her tracks. Early on, Nelson establishes the fact of Philip's routine promiscuity with such heavy-handed subtlety that we think one of those West End revelations of infidelity is what's in store for us. But the question of Philip's bedfellow turns out to be a non-issue, as, in a sense, does the question of Henry's career. Instead, Nelson's play, a series of snapshots, shows us isolated scenes from a trip abroad; it keeps the essence of life—like the real inhabitants of the world of England—decidedly offstage.

Throughout the play, Nelson cheats our expectation about what will prove to be dramatically important, focussing his camera on character rather than event—particularly the character of Taylor, the Machiavellian department chairman, played by Colin Stinton. I'd never seen Mr. Stinton before (I missed him in David Mamet's "Edmond"): he is riveting without being showy, and Taylor's character is the element that comes closest to tying together the frail strands of Nelson's plot. Some alchemy in the subtle brand of officiousness and self-importance which Stinton displays—the level of cowardice with which he urges an American tourist speaking at normal volume not to shout, the precise angle at which he averts his gaze when lying—fills in the spaces between the scenes. We come away feeling we've seen a complete picture.

The acting is all of topnotch quality, though once or twice it's possible to wish that Gregory Mosher had directed the play: in a more stylized staging, the performances might have been even more knowing, even better observed. But a good deal of knowingness already informs Roger Michell's production. I don't think I've ever seen either Kate Burton (as Henry's wife) or Frances Conroy (as an earnest female academic) appear to better advantage; and Mr. Balaban brings to the role of Henry the same sinister combination of obsequiousness and repressed rage he brought to the role of the less powerful of the two moviemakers in Mamet's "Speed-the-Plow." John Rothman does a wonderful little cameo as a Stratford tourist, but it is perhaps Henderson Forsythe and Jane Hoffman, as an academic couple living abroad, who steal the show.

Michell's design team takes the same piecemeal approach to depicting life that the play does. Rick Fisher (lighting) introduces each scene with a flashbulb effect, and Alexandra Byrne (sets and costumes) has bits of furniture and decoration coming down out of the flies to evoke this or that locale. If you've been to those places, you know how exactly right the details are, and there's something chastening about the pleasure you notice yourself taking in the moment of recognition.

I liked best about Nelson's play the fact that it never inspired contempt for any of the objects of its satire. Ultimately, his judgment displays itself in the fact that the character played by Forsythe—a cantankerous and unfashionably reactionary former department chairman—is the only person who ever says anything sensible. It makes me uneasy, though, that Nelson occasionally attributes what in England would be regarded as ideologically unsound views to his Machiavellian antihero. I can't help thinking that putting anti-political-theatre and anti-disarmament speeches in the mouth of Taylor—the most objectionable character in the play—was catering to the British audience in the very spirit that the play set out to satirize.

—MIMI KRAMER

MUSICAL EVENTS

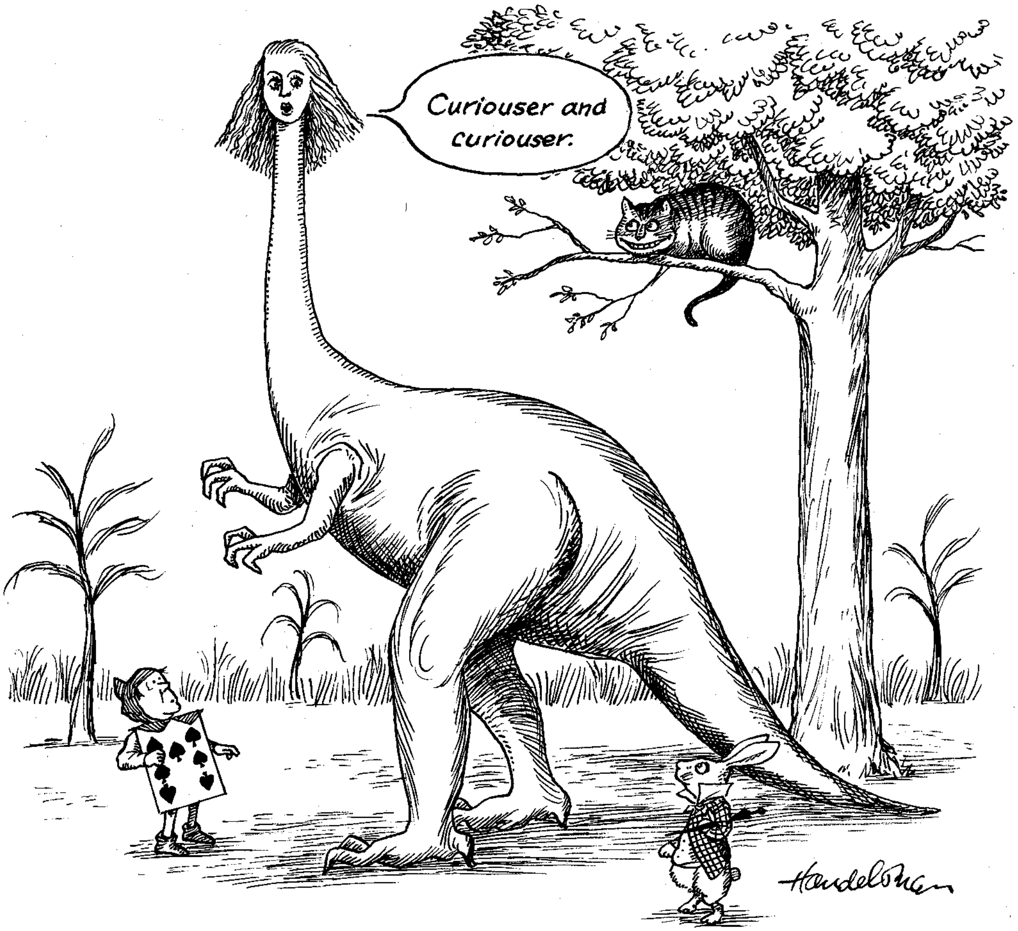
Salon and Lumber Room

THIS year's Schubertiade at the 92nd Street Y—the third installment in the great ten-year chronological presentation of all Schubert's compositions—covered about six months of the composer's career, from August, 1815, to early 1816. Schubert, teaching at his father's school, turned nineteen on January 31, 1816. The celebration was on a smaller scale than its predecessors—only four concerts, not eight—but there was also a concert performance of the opera "Des Teufels Lustschloss," a work of 1814, held over till now. Last year's masterpiece was Schubert's first Goethe setting, "Gretchen am Spinnrade." This year's was another Goethe setting, "Erlkönig," which was composed in October, 1815, and was published in 1821, as Schubert's Opus 1. A fascinating day was devoted to the poem, to its settings by Schubert and by other composers, and to others' arrangements of the Schubert song. (Over a hundred of the last have been found.) An exhibition in the gallery-café adjoining the Y concert hall presented "Erlkönig" iconography. Hermann Prey's electric performance of Carl Loewe's "Erlkönig" was a climax.

A composer as prolific as the young Schubert cannot be in top form all the time. (On October 15, 1815, he wrote eight songs, graceful but of no great moment; four days later he wrote another eight, and one of them was the noble Schiller setting "Hektors Abschied.") As one listened to long strings of social dances, waltzes or ländler, for piano or for solo violin, all in the same key, one grew a shade restive. They were pretty enough, but these pieces were meant to be danced to, not listened to in a concert context. Why not play them in the café during the intermissions and, during the concerts, get on with the music that really matters—maybe even repeating some of the unfamiliar, valuable pieces that are brought to light? If some little jewel among the dances should deserve a special setting, it could be moved into the main hall. Plugging through all the numerous dances in conscientious sequence brought some episodes of the Schubertiade closer to stamp collecting than to artistic adventure. I don't want to sound ungrateful, though. Almost anything written by Schubert is worth hearing. And no one could want censorship to be applied to the songs. The revelation of this year's Schubertiade was the Ossian settings of 1815-16, which generally get a bad press. Richard Capell, in his wonderful little book "Schubert's Songs," responds to them but comes to a sad conclusion:

> What all these compositions pointed to was Schubert's readiness, fired as he was by the mysterious Caledonian poesy, to compose an opera about Ossian's heroes, if only a man of letters in his circle had thought of casting one of the campaigns or disasters into dramatic form for him. Schubert had not Wagner's strength to grapple with that part of the task himself. But the fine landscape descriptions in these Ossian pieces, the pathetic declamation and the free purling of melody, hint at the masterpieces which with the collaboration perhaps of Grillparzer might have enriched German opera. As they stand, the characterization is vague and there is a depressing preponderance of dirges; and for all the beauties they contain, most of them must be relegated to the lumber-room of music.

Nine Ossian settings were sung: "Ossians Lied," "Das Mädchen von Inistore," "Cronnan," "Shilric und Vinvela," "Lodas Gespenst," and "Der Tod Oskars," and the choruses "Bardengesang," "Die Einsiedelei," and "Der Entfernten." Ossian was the legendary third-century Irish poet who after a defeat in battle in 283 —so the Britannica tells us—"spent many years in fairyland, eventually being baptized by St. Patrick." He comes down to us principally in the eighteenth-century versions of his epics by James Macpherson, which made their way in translation throughout Europe. Herder, Goethe, and Napoleon admired them greatly, and they inspired much nineteenth-century music. Macpherson has been

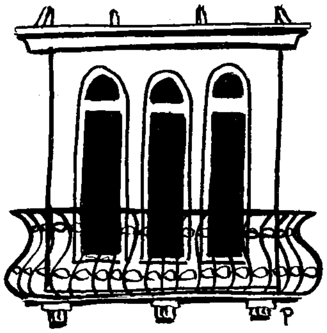


ALLOSAURUS IN WONDERLAND

scorned as a faker, but, as the Britannica says:

> Apart from the doubtful morality of his transactions he must still be regarded as one of the great Scottish writers. The varied sources of his work and its worthlessness as a transcript of actual Celtic poems do not alter the fact that he produced a work of art which by its deep appreciation of natural beauty and the melancholy tenderness of its treatment of the ancient legend did more than any single work to bring about the romantic movement in European, and especially in German, literature.

Schubert the romantic responded memorably. "Cronnan" and "Shilric und Vinvela" were sung by Roberta Peters and Jon Garrison, and played by Warren Jones. Miss Peters was a star of this year's Schubertiade. She had her music by heart (as too few of the singers did), had got it into voice, and had mastered the words. As the wraith voice in the first song and the deserted maiden in the second, when her lover goes forth to Fingal's war, she was moving. Mr. Prey and Leonard Hokanson gave vivid performances of the long "Lodas Gespenst" and the even longer (sixteen-minute) "Der Tod Oskars": the first a scena akin to that of Saul's raising Samuel's shade, the other a strange, tragic narrative of two loving friends who loved the same woman. For voice and piano Schubert wrote great "operas"—or, at least, fragments of operas—setting the scenes, varying the pace, varying the textures, and finding the vocal gestures in which emotion is instinct. It was when he wrote for the theatre that he became discursive, long-winded, undramatic. One would not rank the Ossian settings among his highest achievements, and they are unwieldy things for general use. But they are impressive, all the same. At the Y Schubertiade, when the dust sheets are removed from works that have been relegated to the lumber room, treasures may be revealed.



The strophic songs can also be unwieldy. Kaaren Erickson sang and Warren Jones played the Kosegarten setting "Luisens Antwort." The long, ingenious poem (with its "Luisa will never forget you" refrain) was written in answer to Klamer Schmidt's long, ingenious "Lied der Trennung" (with its "Perhaps Luisa forgets me" refrain), which Mozart had set thirty years before. Schubert's music suggests that he knew the Mozart, which was published in 1789, along with "Das Veilchen." Schmidt's poem has eighteen stanzas; Mozart set four of them to the same music, freely composed two stanzas more, and ended with an intensification of the original music. Kosegarten's poem has nineteen stanzas, and Schubert provided only one tune for them. Miss Erickson sang ten stanzas. After three, one began to think one had perhaps had enough, and then something surprising happened: Miss Erickson and her pianist understood well, as Schubert did, how the same music—when performers are responsive to the words—can carry many different inflections, and it became touching and very interesting to hear Luisa pour her heart out, always to the same melody, now sadly, now tenderly, now passionately, through different memories, different protestations. I could gladly have listened to all nineteen stanzas. In such songs the listeners, too, must be especially attentive to the words; and the Y program book contained full texts and translations. The lines also give life to the strophic ballads. At the same concert, Mr. Prey sang Schubert's setting of Goethe's ballad "Der Gott und die Bajadere"—or, at any rate, five of its nine musically identical stanzas. (This is a piece that Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau chose to omit from his recorded survey of Schubert songs.) It tells a story. Mr. Prey cut the story short and left the bayadere earthbound, unconsumed by flames, unredeemed by her divine lover, not borne heavenward. Vigorous songs with fierce musical imagery now suit Mr. Prey better. He and Mr. Hokanson made much of the tremendous Schiller ballad "Die Bürgschaft," which is through-composed, not strophic; and their account of the Goethe "An Schwager Kronos," a song to set beside "Erlkönig," brought the Schubertiade to a powerful conclusion. Another star this year was the Swiss tenor Ernst Haefliger, who, at the age of seventy, had his songs by heart and sang them with an exactness of tone and a feeling for the words that recalled the late recordings by Karl Erb; his touch transfigured some unremarkable Kosegarten settings. Kevin McMillan, the Canadian baritone whom everyone liked so much last year, was a shade disappointing—newly "cultivated," less forthcoming.

We left a nineteen-year-old Schubert urging Coachman Chronos to drive him into the hurly-burly of a full, adventurous life. The Y adventures, already a high point in New York's musical year, can only become more exciting. But on the opera front we fall behind schedule: "Der Vierjährige Posten," "Fernando," "Claudine von Villa Bella," and "Die Freunde von Salamanka" are already overdue. Although Schubert was not a great opera composer, he poured rich music into his many opera scores. Perhaps Omus Hirshbein, the Y director of arts, can persuade one or two of the music schools and one or two of the small New York opera companies to chip in with some staged productions under the Schubertiade umbrella?

THIS month, I caught up with the Met's new production of "La Traviata," directed by Franco Zeffirelli. I missed the first night, in October, and that first-night cast never came together again: from the next few performances the tenor, the soprano, or the conductor, or two of them at once, dropped out. Carlos Kleiber, who was the principal attraction, conducted only two of the five performances for which he was billed. I waited for the show to settle, and meanwhile read several dismissive accounts of it. Then I saw and heard a stirring and beautiful performance.

My Violetta was Karen Huffstodt (who has also sung the role at the City Opera and at Santa Fe). She feels the part, uses the words, phrases with emotion and musical imagination. Her voice was an imperfect instrument: the coloratura was apt to be a shade violent, and there was an incipient unsteadiness (not yet so severe as to make "vibrant" too kind an adjective), but the basic quality of the tones was appealing. She is a good actress and a moving one. The Alfredo was Alfredo Kraus. When I first heard him in the role, in 1957, I called him "a most promising singer, with a naturally smooth and mellifluous voice and a feeling for tender phrasing." (The Violettas he partnered then were Virginia Zeani and Renata Scotto.) Thirty-

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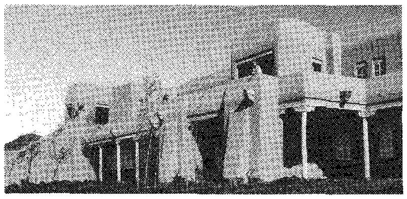

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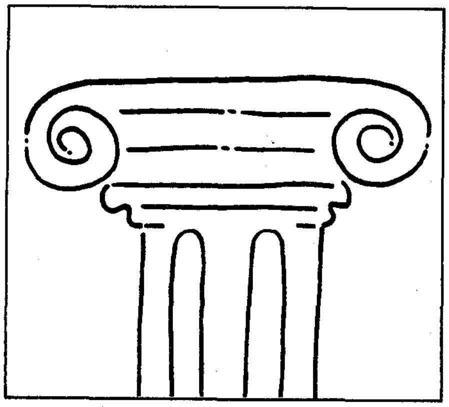

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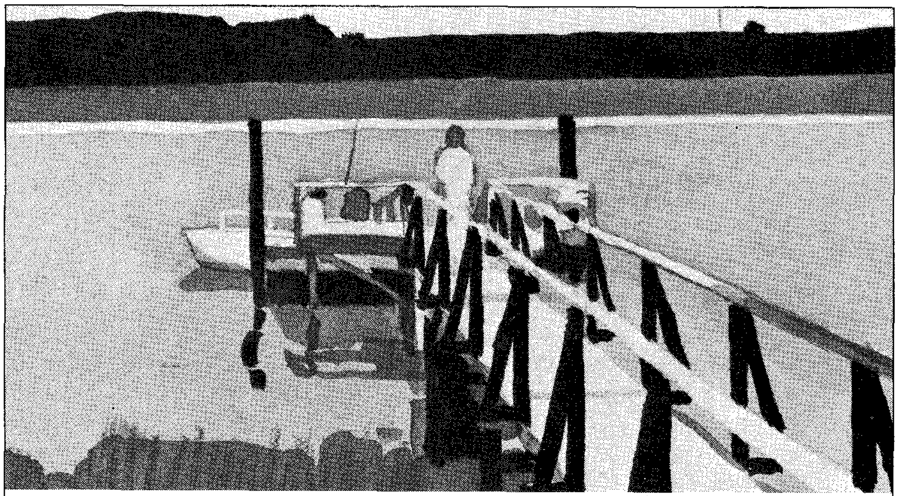

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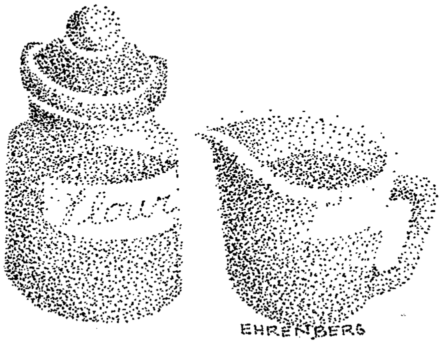
three years on, he may not look the part, but he sang it exquisitely. The delicate rubato of "Parigi, o cara" was especially fine. As Germont there was Paolo Coni, whom Italians have hailed as their new baritone. He made a lovely sound and had smooth moves from note to note. His performance was admirably studied. Michelangelo Veltri conducted sensitively and unobtrusively. The orchestra played well.

I saw Maria Callas's Violetta only in reach-me-down productions in Verona and at Covent Garden, not in the famous stagings that Luchino Visconti (at La Scala in 1955) and Zeffirelli (in Dallas in 1958) created for her. But one day when Callas came to tea she told me about the latter, enacting some of it. Dream settings were not then the cliché they soon became. During the prelude, Callas said, the dying Violetta thought about the past—her broken idyll, then the first meeting with Alfredo—until the scene seemed to become "real" again: guests swirled around her; still musing, not sure quite what was happening, she looked up from her sickbed and recognized a face, then others—"Flora, amici"—and Act I went on its way. Violetta's features, as she looked up, became radiant and youthful; the folds of what had seemed to be a peignoir somehow fell back into those of a beautiful dress. Zeffirelli's new version at the Met opened in a similar way but more bluntly: at the first strains of the Allegro brillantissimo, Miss Huffstodt briskly threw back a counterpane and jumped up, fully dressed. Although this is a big production, needlessly big, it is not ostentatious in the way that Zeffirelli's Met "Bohème," "Tosca," and "Turandot" are. The added scene changes, unlike those in the last act of "Tosca," serve a dramatic purpose. In Act I, when the guests go off to dance Violetta retires to a smaller room, and Alfredo joins her there. Later, the chorus does not have to come pouring on quickly, sing a few lines of rapid farewell, and then troop off again; Violetta simply rejoins the party. And likewise in the second-act finale, Flora's party (which is not divided from the preceding scene by an intrusive intermission). The changes are skillfully and unfussily effected; they reflect the dramatic and musical texture, alternately intimate and opulent; and the picturing of the "povera donna, sola . . . in questo popoloso deserto che appellano Parigi" is poignant and potent. Zeffirelli, far from swamping the soloists in his décor, has provided a staging in which the individual merits of a talented new cast were able to shine.

THE Met's new "Faust," on the other hand, was a dismal affair. The director, Harold Prince, and the designer, Rolf Langenfass—the team that was responsible for the City Opera's tinsel "Don Giovanni" last year—have devised a staging in which it would be hard for any singers to shine. The basic tonality is brown and gray. Huddled on a turntable, against a lowering Expressionist sky, is an assembly part Gaudí-Gothick, part troglodytical, of dwelling, tavern, and church, threaded with winding steps that inhibit any free, easy action. At the close, Marguerite climbs a dizzy flight of steps to a scaffold high, high above the stage, where an executioner is waiting with axe poised. The lighting, by Gil Wechsler—the only lighting designer that the Met seems to have heard of—was banal. Charles Dutoit's conducting, all upbeats, was energetic but not aristocratic—without grace or charm. And the principals were disappointing. The rich but covered tones of Carol Vaness, the Marguerite, never broke free, to wing out into the house; she seemed cautious and ill at ease in the role. In the "Roi de Thulé" her main concern was the manipulation of a spinning wheel. The Jewel Song slipped by. "Il ne revient pas" suited her better. (This air, often omitted, is "Gretchen am Spinnrade," but here Miss Vaness chose not to spin.) Neil Shicoff had Faust's notes but sang them without romance; he did nothing interesting. James Morris's Mephistopheles was delivered in a heavy snarl, never elegantly. Delores Ziegler, in her house début, was a Siebel with a bright presence and nice musical intentions, but her tones were not firm and true. Brian Schexnayder, the Valentine, was more satisfactory: not in "Even bravest heart"—which lacked legato (he sent a message that he was singing through a sinus infection, and asked the audience's indulgence) and was made jerky by a literal-minded treatment of the double-dotting at the close of each line—but in Valentine's death scene, where, at last, something dramatic began to happen.



"Faust," once so popular, still has its champions. In the program essay Rodney Milnes, the editor of *Opera*, remarks, "I sometimes think, Beecham-style, I could give up the whole of 'Tristan' for that little contra-scale leading to the big tune in the Prelude and feel I had profited from the exchange." He tells of successful British attempts to restore the spoken dialogue of the first performance, which took place at the Théâtre Lyrique, in 1859. (I don't think I'd want to hear spoken dialogue attempted, by American singers, in the huge Met.) He notes that when the Soldiers' Chorus was omitted from a recent production "no one asked for their money back." Henry Chorley, in his "Thirty Years' Musical Recollections," wrote, "I shall never forget the riotous enthusiasm which burst out when this magnificent chorus, to which an army of myriads might sweep on its way to victory, electrified the ear at the *Theatre Lyrique*, on the night of the first performance of the opera. I feel it thrill in my pen as I write." At the Met, with glib irony, the buoyant chorus accompanies a procession of wounded, crippled warriors limping home from war, while vivandières and village maidens get into a fight.

The textual history of "Faust" is tangled. That Soldiers' Chorus, lifted from Gounod's abandoned "Ivan the Terrible," replaced an air for Valentine that was dropped before the première. Valentine's present air, "Even bravest heart," was composed for London, to English words, in 1864; the tune comes from the orchestral introduction, and reminiscences of it during the opera are associated with Faust, not Valentine. (A true Valentine theme is heard at Marguerite's aside about her brother during the "Roi de Thulé," as she quotes from her duet with Valentine, another dropped number; it remained unpublished, and was unperformed, it seems, until Alan Montgomery revived it at Oberlin a few years ago.) The Met omits the Walpurgisnacht scenes and the ballet (which was added for the Opéra, in 1869). Act IV is done in the order "Il ne revient pas" and Siebel's "Si la bonheur"; Church Scene; Soldiers' Chorus, Serenade, and Death of Valentine. Acts III, IV, and V are played without intermission.

I don't want to be a spoilsport, but someone must come to the defense of Marie Miolan-Carvalho, the first Marguerite. Mr. Milnes writes that "she was said to have had 'a thin, shrill soprano,' " and he makes merry about "Saint-Saëns' celebrated impersonation, in full drag, of her singing the 'Jewel Song' a semitone sharp." Not a semitone, according to Saint-Saëns's biographer James Harding: "Sometimes it happened that when she was a little tired she sang, not quite out of tune, but imperceptibly a little too high," and the young Saint-Saëns imitated this as a party turn at Pauline Viardot's Sunday evenings. But Miolan-Carvalho was a soprano much praised and admired, both in Paris and in London. Mr. Milnes' phrase about her voice is perhaps a misremembering of what Chorley wrote. Chorley on Miolan-Carvalho deserves fuller quotation:

> The opera-stage has rarely seen a poet's imagining more completely wrought out than in the *Margaret* of Madame Miolan-Carvalho.—I had, for some few years, watched the progress of this exquisitely-finished artist with great interest . . . finding in her performances a sensibility rarely combined with such measureless execution as hers—and it has been fancied hardly possible to a voice in quality like hers—a high and thin *soprano*, with little volume of tone—but I was not prepared for the delicacy of colouring, the innocence, the tenderness of the earlier scenes—and the warmth of passion, and remorse, and repentance which one then so slight in frame (to see the very painter's *Margaret*) could throw into the drama as it went on. Rarely has there been a personation more complete—rarely one more delightful. Those know only one small part of this consummate artist's skill (if even they know her as an incomparable *Cherubino*, and as most brilliant among the brilliant in such a fantastic *extravaganza* as [Victor Massé's] *La Reine Topaze*) that have not seen her in this remarkable "Faust" by M. Gounod.

Saint-Saëns himself, in 1879, wrote a long, detailed, enthusiastic tribute to her merits as a singer, a musician, and an actress: "la Marguerite des Marguerites," surpassing Christine Nilsson, surpassing even her own earlier performances, when, a decade after the première, she took up the role at the Opéra.

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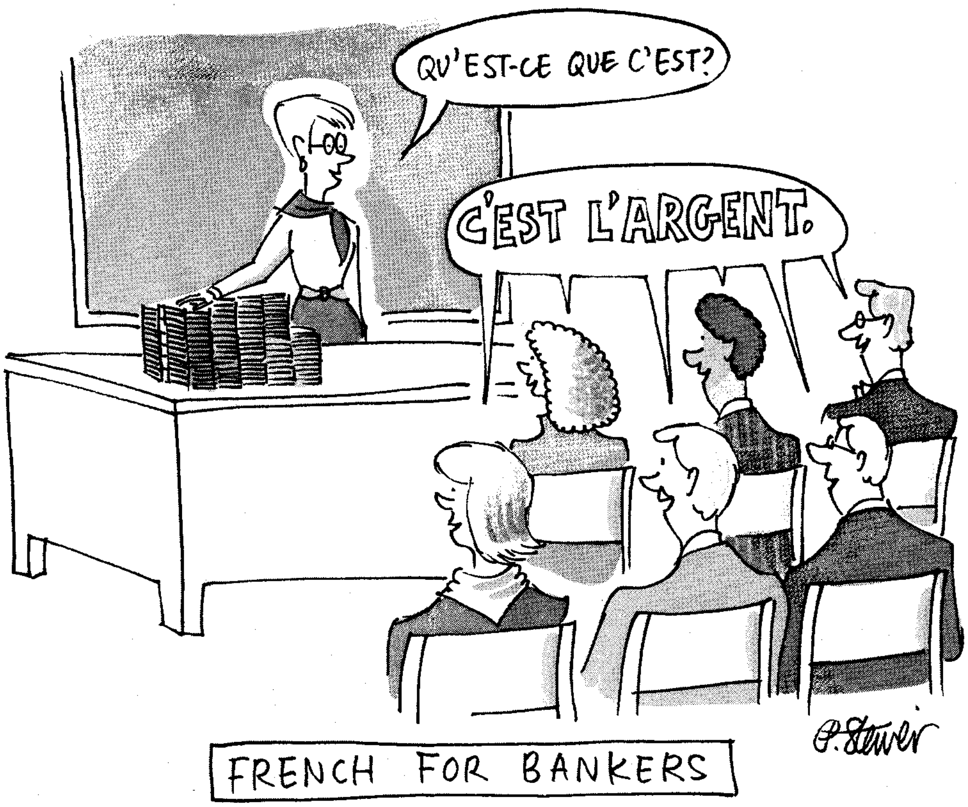
Hiroshima Story

SHOHEI IMAMURA's extraordinary "Black Rain" begins on August 6, 1945, in Hiroshima, about three minutes before the bomb fell. A clock reads eight-twelve; four or five shots later, we see it blown clear off the wall. In this movie in which so much is altered by a single moment, a split-second flash, what changes most radically seems to be time itself—or, at least, our sense of it. The abruptness with which we're plunged into the inferno of the devastated city is shocking, and so is the transition, just minutes afterward, to a tranquil-looking country scene and a very different kind of story. Suddenly, it's 1950, and the people we last saw making their way through the wreckage of Hiroshima—a young woman, Yasuko (Yoshiko Tanaka), and her aunt and uncle, who are her guardians—now live in a remote village and are preoccupied with a traditional problem of Japanese movie families: arranging a marriage. We're in a conventional domestic drama, with a stately, unhurried pace. But we can't settle into this familiar form; it's far less reassuring than it should be.

The leisurely rural existence of Yasuko, now twenty-five, and her guardians is restful in only the most superficial ways: both the uncle, Shigematsu Shizuma (Kazuo Kitamura), and the aunt, Shigeko (Etsuko Ichihara), suffer from radiation sickness and have been ordered not to work too hard. What in any other context we might experience as the serene rhythm of contemplation is in "Black Rain" the enforced ease of the desperately ill—a false peace, life put on permanent hold. And the attempt to find a husband for Yasuko has a strangely detached, almost hypothetical quality, a sense of something willed but only half believed: the family feels that if a marriage can be arranged, despite the local gossip that the young woman, too, was contaminated by the blast, then the rumors will have been disproved and the image of a future created. No one really knows what effect the bomb had on Yasuko: she was a few miles outside the city at the time of the explosion, but she was exposed to the "black rain" (a mixture of precipitation and radioactive ash) that followed it. Her guardians' marriage scenario is a hopeful fiction—a story that posits a Yasuko who is unambiguously and forever well, and a myth in which the family reenters the swift, directed flow of real time.

The members of this odd, slow-motion household, which the uncle describes as "a community bound by the bomb," live in a perpetual state of suspension, a constant twilight. Their survival is too tenuous to give them much joy; it's more like a wary, static persistence. They're watching themselves, and each other, all the time—monitoring their bodies and spirits, looking for symptoms, signs, reasons to hope or despair. Watching them, we feel suspended, too, unsure how to respond; we've never seen a family drama quite like this. Imamura demands that these characters be observed from a distance; he keeps us keenly aware of their estrangement from themselves. What interests him about them isn't simply their knowledge that they're going to die sooner or later; it's their peculiar relationship to ordinary life. They've been contaminated by uncertainty, and every gesture they make, every word they speak, is halting, self-conscious, tentative. They don't know what kind of story they're in, and Imamura spreads their doubt to us.

The novel, by Masuji Ibuse, from which "Black Rain" has been adapted is an established classic of postwar Japanese fiction, but Imamura makes the material his own. Ibuse uses the diaries of *hibakusha* (bomb survivors) to create a chronicle of the sights and sounds of the great catastrophe, and he's equally concerned with recording the grim medical details of radiation sickness. The event itself, as it's remembered by the witnesses, has pride of place in his narrative; the story of the Shizumas in 1950, which frames the diary excerpts, gives pathos to the scrupulously reconstructed horrors. Although it's a powerful novel, the film is a subtler and more complex work. Imamura doesn't dwell on the appalling spectacle of the bombing and its immediate aftermath. He treats it with telling poetic concision, as a series of awful tableaux (many of them taken from the book) flashing before us with the speed of memory and also with memory's painful selectivity—that cruel instinct for the most terrible and most unassimilable images. We see stiff, charred bodies, looking more like primitive dolls than like human beings, among the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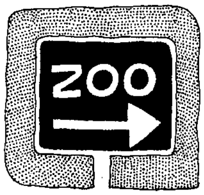
debris; we see a small figure—burned all over but still standing, as alien-looking as a horror-movie mutant—pleading with his brother to recognize him; we see a man screaming from his window "Where's Hiroshima? It's disappeared!" just before he falls to his death in the city's rubble. We're stunned but not overwhelmed. Imamura wants us dry-eyed and clearheaded for what follows: he has shifted the focus of the narrative to the postwar story, which is no longer a framing device or a means of intensifying an already unbearable sadness. His "Black Rain," though it looks at times like one of Yasujiro Ozu's dignified, formal family sagas, is entirely (and blessedly) free of sentimentality. Its tone is analytical, bracingly interrogative; it seems to question the very reality of ordinary life, normal time. The Shizumas' existence unfolds undramatically, at the languid tempo of a dream. It's all anticipation—waiting for something to happen, and trying to sustain the illusion that their everyday lives will yield up the kind of defining moment (like Yasuko's marriage) that most of us have been led to expect. Unbelievably, Imamura has transformed this Hiroshima story into a Sartrean soap opera.



His film is also, implicitly, a reproach to the values and the style of the great Ozu, for whom he once worked as an assistant. The movies that Ozu made after the war—"Tokyo Story" is the most celebrated, and the best—tell stories of Japanese middle-class families as if nothing very significant had happened in the forties, as if all the old beliefs in family and duty could simply be restored. His films, which are perhaps the purest representations on the screen of the culture's traditional values, are often extremely moving, but Imamura clearly has no patience with them; he's far more interested in impurity, in the more vital, even barbaric, aspects of human nature, which Ozu's lordly, fixed camera never reveals. The brilliant and original films Imamura made in the sixties and seventies—movies like "The Insect Woman" (1963), "The Pornographers" (1966), and "Vengeance Is Mine" (1979)—seem determined to include everything the Master left out: greed, incest, and violence rule Imamura's families (and, by implication, the society as a whole). And he developed a jagged, disorienting style to go with his corrosive vision. "Black Rain" has a smoother surface than the earlier films, but it's deceptive. Behind the calmly composed black-and-white images there's real rage. Scenes of the family sitting around on mats alternate with savagely funny vignettes: a shell-shocked veteran who throws himself in front of passing buses and motorbikes, thinking they're enemy tanks; a highly theatrical psychic who wails and chants and carries on and then gives the Shizumas the pedestrian advice that they can insure Yasuko's happiness by visiting her mother's grave. (Shigematsu mutters, "These psychics always give the same advice: 'Visit the grave.' ") And Imamura isn't keen on the idea of restoring the old ways. In "Black Rain," life before the bomb is represented by three minutes of unsettling images: people in uniforms, a stray dog, the clock. This time around, he's attacking the ethics and the aesthetics of his former boss from within: the life of the Shizumas is Ozu's world seen in a very dark looking glass.

The most surprising thing about "Black Rain" is that it isn't depressing. It's too intelligent; every scene is drenched in irony. We understand, by the end, that the story the Shizumas are writing for themselves functions for them like belief in a miracle cure; it's not so different from the aloe plants they eat, the carp blood they drink, the prayers they sometimes recite. Imamura holds himself far enough away from them to show us the nature and the depth of their illusions, but he doesn't make his characters pathetic. In a way, the Shizumas' dreamlike existence really is idyllic. It removes them from the frantic activity of Japan's postwar industrial culture: they're exempt from history, free of the obligation to share in a contaminated notion of progress. In the movie's final shots—of Shigematsu watching an ambulance take another member of the family away, and then of the mountains beyond the village—we feel an exalting emptiness.

—Terrence Rafferty

Editors' Note: Terrence Rafferty is filling in for Pauline Kael while she has the flu.

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TRAVELS OF THE ROCK

PLYMOUTH ROCK is a glacial erratic at rest in exotic terrane. When Mayflower, an English merchant ship, approached the rock, in 1620, the rock, like the ship, had recently been somewhere else. Heaven knew where. Some geologists have said that the rock is Laurentian granite, from north of the St. Lawrence River (Loring, 1920). Most American geologists have preferred a provenance closer to home: Cape Ann, for example, north of Boston (Carnegie Institution, 1923); or the region of Cohasset, south of Boston (Shimer, 1951); or even the bed of Plymouth Bay (Mather, 1952). Wherever the boulder came from, it was many times larger in 1620 than it is today.

It was also in one piece. In 1774, the rock was split in two, horizontally, like a bagel. There were those who feared and those who hoped that the break in the rock portended an irreversible rupture between England and the American colonies. If so, the lower half was the Tory half, for it stayed behind, while the upper part was moved from the harborside to Liberty Pole Square for the specific purpose of stirring up lust for independence. Scarce was independence half a century old when a new portentous split occurred, in the upper, American, rock. It broke, vertically, into two principal parts, shedding fragments to the side. Eventually, the two halves of the upper part were rejoined by common mortar, containing glacial pebbles from countless sources, and the rock as a whole was reconstructed. The upper part was returned to the waterfront, where a thick filling of mortar was slathered on the lower part, and Plymouth Rock—with its great sutured gash appearing like a surgical scar—was reassembled so that it would be, to whatever extent remained possible, a simulacrum of the landmark that was there in 1620.

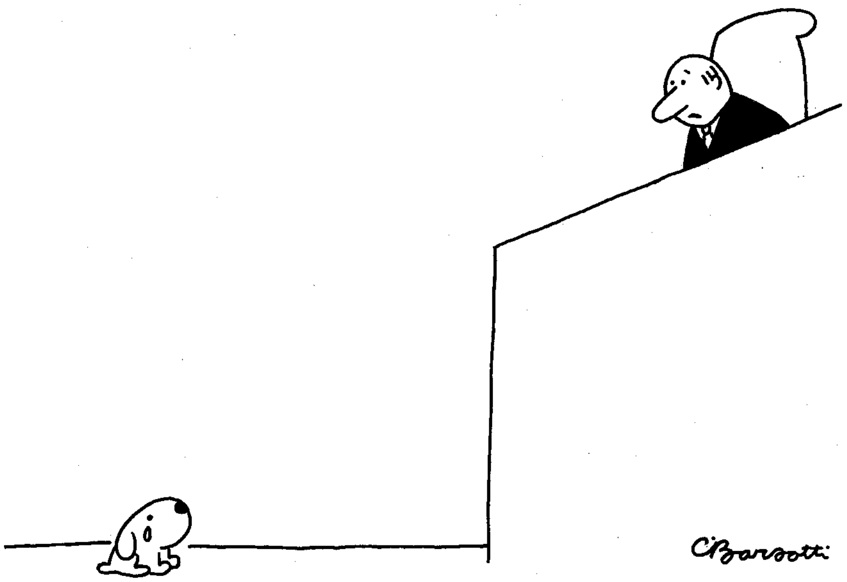
In the course of the twentieth century, the mortar did not hold. Pebbles fell out. Chunks. Despite a canopy over the rock (McKim, Mead & White, 1921), water got into the great crack, froze, and wedged against the bonding force with pressures as high as two thousand pounds per square inch. The rock could not stay whole, and on August 7, 1989, in an item disseminated by the Associated Press, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management announced that the oldest symbol of the New World was in dire need of a mason.

IN the British merchant marine, Mayflowers were numerous. The one that approached the landmark in Plymouth Bay that December was twelve or so years old, and had, for the most part, carried wine to England from Bordeaux. Her new assignment was equally commercial. When she sailed from Devon, she was under instructions to go to the mouth of the Hudson River, where her passengers, under a seven-year contract with investors in London, would warehouse timber, furs, and fish. She was meant to land on New York rock, but she missed. After a crossing of nine stormy weeks, she came upon Cape Cod. She dropped anchor in the cape's sheltered bay and spent a month there while a number of passengers, including William Bradford, went ashore to reconnoitre the cape's resources. In the woods one day, Bradford noticed a sapling bent over like a dancer touching the ground. Acorns were strewn beneath the sapling. Bradford moved close, too close, and "it gave a sudden jerk up, and he was immediately caught by the leg" (Mourt, 1622). The noose that caught him was state of the art by English standards, and so was the rope. In their searches the explorers found stored corn in buried baskets, which they took for their own use. They opened the grave of a child. "About the legs and other parts of it was bound strings and bracelets of fine white beads; there was also by it a little bow, about three quarters long, and some other odd knacks. We brought sundry of the prettiest things away with us, and covered the corpse up again." Before the sun had set four times, "arrows came flying amongst us."

In a small sloop, a scouting party sailed west, into a gale that broke the boat's rudder and shattered the mast. Nonetheless, they found what is now Plymouth Harbor, climbed to the high defendable ground behind it, discovered a sweet brook and deserted fields. This was not the "rockbound coast" that poetry and fiction would claim it to be. The shore was sandy. It was a beach. It was a long strand of wave-sorted till with almost no rocks of any size. A most notable exception was a big boulder of more than two hundred tons, alternately washed and abandoned by the cycle of the tides—a rock so prominently alone that from across water it would have looked like a house.

Bradford, Carver, Standish, Winslow, Howland, and the others—the exploring party—sailed back to Cape Cod to inform the Mayflower company that they had chosen a site for the plantation. They learned that Bradford's wife, Dorothy, had gone over the side of the ship and had drowned. She was one of four who died before the ship reached Plymouth. To get ashore on the cape, the people had to wade in several feet of water. Temperatures were often below the freeze point. Rain and spray formed ice on their clothing. Most of the children as well as the adults had colds, coughs, pneumonic symptoms that plunged into scurvy. On that gray water under gray sky—under wind and through snow—the land around them must have seemed less than promised. Dorothy Bradford was an apparent suicide. There had been a hundred and two passengers in all. One by one, across the next few months, forty-seven more would die.

A few days before Christmas, the ship entered Plymouth Harbor and approached the site near the mouth of the brook, the landmark rock below the foot of the hill. Most of the people lived on the ship until the end of March, routinely coming and going to trap or hunt or work on the initial construction. The brook, entering the bay, had cut a channel in the otherwise shallow water. The channel turned



"Well, perhaps 'guilty' is too strong a word."

north, paralleled the shore, and ran close to the seaward side of the great rock. For two hundred years, oceangoing vessels would use this channel.

AFTER the theory of continental glaciation was developed and accepted, in the nineteenth century, geologists reviewing the story of Plymouth took pleasure in pointing out that the rock had travelled, too: "The Pilgrims' Rock is . . . itself an older pilgrim than those who landed on it" (Adams, 1882). "Plymouth Rock is a bowlder from the vicinity of Boston, having accomplished its pilgrimage long before the departure of the Mayflower from Holland" (Wright, 1905, "The Ice Age in North America and Its Bearings Upon the Antiquity of Man").

A headline in the New York *Times* of October 25, 1923, said:

PLYMOUTH ROCK CANADIAN

What followed was a summary of confident assertions emanating from the Geology Department of the University of Rochester. The news caused the Acting Governor of Massachusetts to schedule hearings. The news caused Charles E. Munroe, the chairman of the Committee on Explosives Investigations, of the National Research Council, in Washington, to write a "PERSONAL—Confidential" letter to Robert Lincoln O'Brien, the editor of the Boston *Herald*, seeking his assistance in developing an investigation that would yield "more complete knowledge of the rock" and, fortuitously, "trace its origin to some other locality than Canada, thus greatly relieving the minds and assuaging the feelings of many, not only within New England but without."

What Munroe wanted was a piece of the rock. He wanted to place a hand specimen in the hand of Henry S. Washington, petrologist, geologist, geochemist, of the Carnegie Institution's Geophysical Laboratory. O'Brien, in turn, put the request to Arthur Lord, the president of the Pilgrim Society, in Plymouth. Lord replied that the rock had *been* studied by geologists and identified as syenite. Syenite? said Munroe to Henry Washington. Where could that be from? Montreal, said Henry Washington. Or half a dozen places in Ontario. He also identified possible sources in Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Massachusetts, including Cape Ann. Cape Ann was the likeliest of this lot. Large boulders glacially transported are seldom moved very far.

When the theory of plate tectonics congealed, in the late nineteen-sixties, it opened corridors of thought that have led to a complete revision of the geologic history of New England, where, it now appears, there is enough alien rock to effect the total detonation of the late chairman of the Committee on Explosives Investigations if he were here to hear about it. The short travels of glacial boulders are ignored by these new insights. In present theory, New England's very bedrock has come from overseas.

In Reston, Virginia, not long ago, at the headquarters of the United States Geological Survey, E-an Zen invited me to have a look at a snapshot taken from a space shuttle a hundred and sixty miles above Plymouth. The picture was nine inches high and eighteen wide. It had been made with a Large Format Camera. As with the old view cameras from the era of Mathew Brady, the negative was as large as the print. With a casual glance, you could see at once the region the picture covered. You could see Lake George, in the Adirondacks. You could see Vermont lakes, the Connecticut River, Narragansett Bay, and Cape Cod. But the picture was of such small scale—from eight hundred and forty-five thousand feet—that most of it seemed to the unaided eye a swirl of white patches in varying abstracts of gray. It covered, after all, at least twenty-four thousand square miles. Zen handed me a Hastings triplet, a ten-power lens that geologists hold close to outcrops and specimens in order to study crystals. He put his finger on the edge of Massachusetts Bay, and said, "Look there." I leaned close to the photograph, as if it were a rock, and saw stripes at the head of a runway at Logan Airport. Moving the lens down the coast, I saw the breakwater in Plymouth Harbor. I saw Town Brook, Town Wharf, State Pier, and Coles Hill. I did not see Plymouth Rock, because of the canopy above it. On the shore of a Vermont lake I saw a small outcrop called White Rock, which I knew from childhood. Zen also had a picture that reached from Montreal to the Maine coast. I saw the house of a friend of mine on Mount Desert Island. I saw a fourteen-acre island in Lake Winnipesaukee, where I fish for chain pickerel in the fall. I saw smoke drifting away from the weather station at the summit of Mt. Washington.

After I put down the hand lens and leaned back, Zen asked if I could discern in the unmagnified pictures variations in texture from one area to another. I said I could. The country east of the Penobscot River, for example, differed from the country to the west as, say, burlap differs from tweed. Most variations were more subtle. On those pictures, from that altitude, the differences were no greater than the differences that sometimes occur on the surface of a calm lake. But the differences were there. New England appeared to consist of several swaths, as much as a hundred miles wide and more or less parallel to the seacoast. Zen was sporting a pleased grin. The large-format photographs seemed to illustrate conclusions he had reached from paleomagnetic, petrologic, structural, and seismic data interpreted in the light of plate tectonics, and in no way refuted by paleontology. Placing a finger on each side of the Penobscot River, he said those differing textural bands were exotic terranes.

As plate theorists reconstruct plate motions backward through time, they see landmasses now represented by Europe and Africa closing together with North America during the Paleozoic Era. These were the assembling motions that produced the great continent Pangaea. Much more recently, western Pangaea split apart to form the Atlantic Ocean, which is young, and is widening still. The ocean that was closed out in the making of Pangaea—the older ocean, the ancestral Atlantic, which used to be approximately where the Atlantic is now—is commonly called Iapetus, since Iapetus was the father of Atlas, and plate theorists, in studied humility, thus record their debt to mythology. The collision, as Zen and others see it in the rock they study and the data they otherwise collect, was not a simple suture of the two great sides. There were islands involved, and island arcs—Madagascars, New Zealands, Sumatras, Japans. "They were large islands in an ocean of unspecified size," he said. "Islands like Newfoundland." Some of them may have amalgamated while still standing off in the ocean. Some not. In one way or another, they were eventually laminated into Pangaea, and slathered like mortar between the huger bodies of rock.

A couple of hundred million years later, as the Atlantic opened, bits and pieces of original America stuck to Europe and rode east. The Outer Hebrides, for example, are said to derive from the northern North American continental core.

HEBRIDES CANADIAN

The converse was true as well. Stuck to North America, fragments of Europe stayed behind. Baltimore, for example. Nova Scotia. A piece of Staten Island.

The part of Massachusetts that includes Plymouth and Boston is now understood to derive from overseas. If from Europe, part of New England could be part of Old England, a New Old England in an Old New England or an Old Old England in a New New England. The Mayflower people landed where they left.

AROUND eight one morning in mid-November of 1989, Paul Choquette, of South Dartmouth, Massachusetts, who had been selected only three days earlier as Mason to the Rock, arrived in Plymouth under considerable pressure to get the repair work done well before Thanksgiving, which was eight days away. He showed up in a U-Haul truck with Nebraska license plates and this message emblazoned on the sides: "ONE-WAY & LOCAL/ADVENTURE IN MOVING." Choquette was a trim, handsome man in his forties, with green eyes, dense brown hair, a loose, lean frame, and the serious look of a concentrating golfer. There was, as well, resemblance to a golfer in his roomily draped wine-red sweater, in his striped collar hanging free, less so in his bluejeans and his white running shoes. He had with him his entire family and then some. He had Jonathan, Jennifer, Elizabeth, and Tim—his children, twelve to twenty-one. He had his brother-in-law, Richard Langlois, and Richard's six-year-old, Ian, who said, "Why is this important? There's no such thing as Pilgrims."

Mark Cullinan, the chief engineer of the Department of Environmental Management, remarked that Choquette's task would be something like taking the tonsils out of the President of the United States—a relatively minor operation that nonetheless required someone of more than ordinary skill in the art. Moreover, the work would be accomplished with a lot of people watching: the public and the media, not to mention Paul Botelho, Cullinan's assistant chief engineer; Ruth Teixeira, the Region 1 regional engineer; Ronald Hirschfeld, a geotechnical consulting engineer; Chris Green, a landscape architect of the Office of Cultural and Historic Landscapes of the Department of Environmental Management; Peter O'Neil, the departmental press secretary; Shelley Beeby, the deputy commissioner of communications; and Donald Matinzi, of Plymouth, the park supervisor.

This was a day of chilling, intermittently heavy rain, and no one was sorry to be standing inside the McKim, Mead & White portico, which is locally known as the cage. It's a bit like a Bernese bear pit. Granite walls enclose the rock on three sides. The fourth side, through iron grillwork, is open to the sea. The entablature is supported on twelve tall columns, and is six feet thick, or thick enough to block rain. Under it, visitors stand behind iron railings looking down at the rock on its patch of beach.

The rock has become fairly round and has a diameter varying from five and a half to six and a half feet. Early in the eighteenth century, it was measured for purposes of a town plat, with the resulting description that the "Grate Rock yt lyeth below Ye sd Way from ye stone at ye foot of The hill neare the Southerly Corner of John Ward's land is :30: foot in width" (Plymouth Records, 1715-16). What you see now weighs only four tons. The lower, buried part is larger. Spring tides climb into the cage and far up the rock. Nor'easters drive seas against it as well. When trucks go by on Water Street, the rock shakes.

The rock is filled with xenoliths—alien and black. They are stones, cobbles, hunks of older rock that fell into the larger mass while it was still molten or, if cooler than that, sufficiently yielding to be receptive. The xenoliths are like raisins in a matrix of bread. The rock is crisscrossed with very narrow, very straight veins of quartz. At some point in the nineteenth century, it cracked along one or two of these veins.

On the seaward side, the old repair was in particular need of attention. The national treasure looked sorry indeed, like twice-broken crockery. After the news of its condition went out on the A.P., epoxy-makers all over the country offered their expertise free of charge. But Cullinan decided that high-strength epoxy was too much of a high-tech solution. To get rid of it, if that should ever be necessary, you would have to destroy rock.

Mortars can be mixed that look like stone. In other words, despite the fact that the great crack was as wide as a python, an effort could be made to fool the public into thinking it wasn't there. Cullinan rejected that idea, too. The remaining choice—other than leaving the rock alone—was to chip out the old mortar and replace it.

Choquette climbed down into the cage with so many others that they did suggest a surgical team. He had his duckbill chisel, his cold chisels, his brick hammer, his five-pound hammer, his three-pound hammer, his paintbrushes, his wire brushes, his cord, his trowels, his wrenches, and his two sons. His brother-in-law stacked three planks against the iron grillwork on the seaward side and wrapped a rubber sheet around them in anticipation of the rising tide. Somewhere above the rain there was a full moon.

Choquette went at the crack with a chisel. Tap. Tap. Ta-tap-tap-tump. He said, "Listen to that void!" Bits of mortar flew away. The opening widened. After a couple of hundred taps, he reached in and pulled seaweed out of Plymouth Rock. It was dry, and looked like twigs and straw. It came out of the interior like mattress stuffing.

He said the old mortar was very hard —"a lot of Portland and not much lime." In replacing it, he would use four parts pulverized stone and four parts aggregate with one part lime (for plasticity). He would clean the crack with Detergent 600. He would put his new mortar in and, twenty minutes later, wash it with a hose and brush it. This would get rid of lime that tends to come to the surface. It would make the mortar darker, and also cause it to blend better into the pores of the rock.

To show to anyone who might be interested, he had a yogurt cup full of the pulverized stone. It came from a quarry in Acushnet, he said. Acushnet, Massachusetts, next to New Bedford, sits on hundreds of feet of long-transport glacial till. It is probable that the shards of rock going into Choquette's mortar came from three or four New England states and much of eastern Canada, and, in turn, from almost any Old World country south of Lapland. If a corner of the Old World was missing in the pulverized till, it might well be represented among the small angular stones that Choquette had

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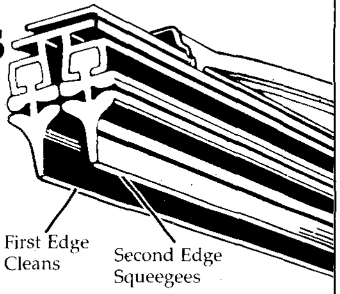

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brought from his own property, in South Dartmouth, to match the aggregate in the existing mortar. Steadily tapping, he continued to clean out the rock.

From above, someone in the gathering crowd asked him why he was attracted to this sort of specialty.

He said, "It intrigues me. Everything today is fast track. You know—you work it up and say, 'Where's the check?' "

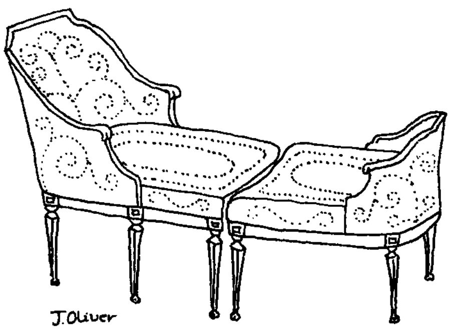
"Are you ready for the Liberty Bell?"

"If you give me a shot at it, I'll try." Tap. Ta-tap-tap-tump. "This rock is already eighty per cent gone. Even if we can preserve ten per cent of it, we should preserve it. What matters is what it means."

The Department of Environmental Management had sought an expert mason who had experience with historic masonry. The Historic Commissions of five states were asked for recommendations. This produced a short list of eight masons, including the restorer of Belvedere Castle, in Manhattan's Central Park, and the restorer of Austin Block, in the Charlestown section of Boston—a three-story granite building made of rock from an island in Boston Harbor. Seven years earlier, Choquette had reached his decision that there had to be more in masonry than trowelling together new buildings. Venturing into restoration as often as he got a chance, he had done the exterior of the Academy of Music Theatre, in Northampton, the exterior of a church in New Bedford, and various lithic antiquities on Nantucket. As masons were evaluated for the Plymouth assignment, they were asked in formal interviews what approach they would take to the problem—to say in detail just how they would think through and plan the work. Among the candidates was one who replied, "You wanta me to fix the crack, right? I do a good job. It take an hour." The finalists were Steve Striebel, of Gill, Massachusetts, and Paul Choquette. The job then went to bids. Striebel's bid was a hundred times as high as Choquette's. So Choquette got the job. He bid a dollar.

IN November and December of 1620, Mayflower people landed (and slept) in half a dozen places before reaching and settling in Plymouth. In the two contemporary accounts of the Plymouth landings—the several landings of the exploring sloop, and the arrival of the ship itself—nowhere is it mentioned, or obliquely suggested, that anyone set foot on a rock (Mourt, 1622; Bradford, 1630-50). Yet by 1820 the rock was set in the diadem of the republic. Daniel Webster, as the principal speaker on Forefathers' Day, on the two-hundredth anniversary of the Plymouth settlement, said, "Beneath us is the rock on which New England received the feet of the Pilgrims." He continued for an hour, his eloquent images provoking tears, and no one seemed to doubt him. The media had long since accepted the story. "The Federalists toasted their ancestors with the hope that the empire which sprung from their labors be as permanent as the rock of their landing" (*Colombian Sentinel*, December 22, 1798). And when Plymouth's first official history was published it said, "The identical rock, on which the sea-wearied Pilgrims first leaped . . . has never been a subject of doubtful designation" (Thacher, 1832). Foreign journalists covering the United States noted in conversations with Americans everywhere what "an object of veneration" the rock had become—a reverence that was growing in inverse proportion to the size of the rock itself. "I saw bits of it carefully preserved in several towns of the Union. . . . Here is a stone which the feet of a few outcasts pressed for an instant, and the stone becomes famous; it is treasured by a great nation; its very dust is shared as a relic" (Tocqueville, 1835).

Inevitably, a shrine was built to enshrine it—a tall four-legged canopy reaching back in time to Trajan and the baldachino and forward to the missile silo. The designer was Hammatt Billings, the illustrator of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "Mother Goose," and "Little Women." It stood for fifty-three years before it was replaced by McKim, Mead & White. The rock that fitted into this ciborium not only had travelled across an ocean as bedrock and then an unknown distance as a glacial boulder but also had become remarkably mobile in Plymouth. When twenty yoke of oxen were brought to the site to move it, in 1774, pitonlike screws were put into it to assist the operation. The splitting occurred as if in a quarry, and the oxen went off with half a rock. On the Fourth of July, 1834, that upper half was moved several blocks, from the town square to the yard of Pilgrim Hall. In a two-wheeled cart, it was drawn through Plymouth as if it were the bull Ferdinand. It was escorted by the Plymouth Band, the Standish Guards, and half a dozen youths hauling behind them a model of the Mayflower. A story has come down from that parade to the effect that a pin came out of the bed of the cart, causing it to tilt, and—with the whole town of Plymouth looking on—the rock crashed to earth and broke into several pieces. Of the palimpsest of quartz veins in Plymouth Rock, each is a healed crack. The cracking and the healing could be associated with its original cooling (when its temperature got down to about a thousand degrees Fahrenheit), or with tectonic activity (anything from local faulting to pervasive plate motions) that heated it up. In either case, the quartz seams are planes of weakness—quarrymen call them sap streaks—and the break that Paul Choquette would one day be asked to fix followed such a vein. Since the story of the parade accident lacks convincing roots, it is probable that the rock's famous crack was made over years by rainwater, penetrating along a vein, freezing, wedging.



Meanwhile, the lower half of the rock remained at the waterfront, and actually served as a part of the surface of a commercial wharf, with iron-tired carts rolling over it filled with fish or lobsters, timber, coal. In the mud-traceried right-of-way, it bloomed like a plantar wart. It was a few feet from the front step of a grocery. When tourists came to see the rock, the grocer swept it clean, saying that he was "brushing off the cornerstone of the nation," and if anyone wanted a souvenir there was a hammer and chisel near the door. While Billings' canopy was under construction, the lower-half rock was hoisted up and placed to one side. As it sat there for some years exposed, it lost considerable weight.

Large pieces were broken off and stolen. Some were rebroken into small pieces that were individually sold or, in one case, used as aggregate in making a concrete floor. A few large hunks went into a pickle barrel to weigh down corning beef. A piece that weighed four hundred pounds became a doorstep.

In 1867, when the lower half of the original rock was placed in its new setting, it did not fit. It was too long and thick for the display purposes the designer had in mind. So the rock was trimmed and planed. Its upper surface was lowered, as chips flew.

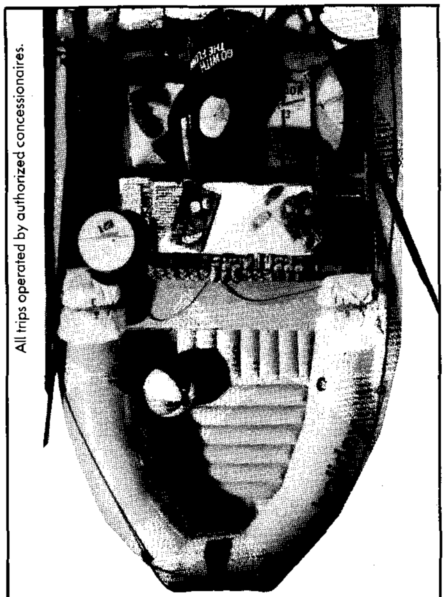
In 1880, the halves were reunited. The upper half was hauled downhill and set on top of the piece in the canopy. Together, the two parts were about as stable now as an egg resting on an egg. They were chinked firm by imported rocks of no established pedigree. Into the upper half the date 1620 was chiselled boldly.

At the time of the tercentenary, the Plymouth shoreline was reconfigured, and some thousands of tons of large broken rock were lined up as riprap on the once sandy beach. The old canopy was removed to make way for the new portico. As the national triolith was lifted by a crane, its repaired crack widened and the parts separated. The Obelisk Waterproofing Company, of New York City, was called in to waterproof the rock. This done, Plymouth Rock in its several parts was put on skids and hauled to a warehouse, where it remained until the portico was ready. In 1921, with mortar and trowel, the sculptor Cyrus Dallin reassembled the parts. His standing bronze figure of Chief Massasoit watched from Coles Hill, the high defendable ground above.

I am indebted to Julie Johnson, of Boston, who once studied Plymouth Rock for the Department of Environmental Management and whose specialty is historic preservation, for guiding me to a large part of this research, in the archives of Pilgrim Hall, in Plymouth.

The rock came to Plymouth about twenty thousand years ago. During the past couple of centuries, much of it has continued to travel, and some has recrossed the sea. A trimmed, squared hundred-pound piece long stood on a twenty-foot plinth in the courtyard of an inn at Immingham, in Lincolnshire, where, on the Humberside in 1607, the disaffected Puritans departed for Holland. There are pieces of Plymouth Rock at the Conoco refinery in Hull, Massachusetts. A piece of Plymouth Rock that weighs more than fifty pounds is in the Plymouth Congregational Church, on Schermerhorn Street, in Brooklyn. There is a piece of Plymouth Rock in Los Gatos, California. There is a piece of Plymouth Rock in the Nevada State Museum, in Carson City. In the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, is a piece of Plymouth Rock about twenty-two inches long and of such craggy beauty that it could serve the art of *suiseki*, in which it would be called a distant-mountain stone. In the nineteen-twenties, the Antiquarian Society of Plymouth sold pieces of the rock as paperweights. There have been tie tacks, pendants, earrings, cufflinks made from Plymouth Rock. In 1954, a patriotic citizen sent President Eisenhower a piece of Plymouth Rock with the message "Now, Mr. President, if there are times when the going is hard and you may be discouraged, just take this little stone in your hand and . . ." Ike wrote back to thank him.

E-AN ZEN, who is approximately as exotic as the rock he studies, was born in Peking in 1928 and came to the United States when he was eighteen years old. Educated at Cornell and Harvard, he has worked primarily in the northern Appalachians. He seems to know every outcrop, contour, brook, and village of New England. Zen is wiry, spare, compact. It is not unimaginable that the term "rock-ribbed" was coined so that it would exist to describe him. He is the editor of the geologic map of Massachusetts (Zen, Goldsmith, Ratcliffe, Robinson, Stanley, 1983). Among his benchmark papers is one that is titled "Exotic Terranes in the New England Appalachians" (1983). When I saw him in Reston, he had recently written a guidebook for the International Geological Congress, laying out a field trip across the complete aggregation of terranes from Saratoga County, New York, through Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts to the coast of Rhode Island. He showed me the map the field trip followed. Rutland and Bennington, in Vermont, and Williamstown and Stockbridge, in Massachusetts, were all lined up near the eastern edge of the old North Ameri-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—Matthew Arnold

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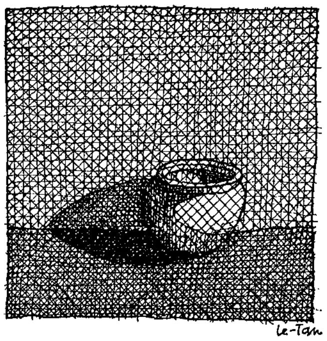
can continent. Hanover, New Hampshire, and Brattleboro, Vermont, were in a sliver of country with an average width of scarcely twenty miles that Zen called the Brompton-Cameron Terrane. He said it was not exotic. It seemed to be "a distal part of North America that was pushed onto the continent like a floe in an ice-jam—rammed in." Keene, New Hampshire, Amherst and Springfield, Massachusetts, and much of the Connecticut River lay in a swath about seventy miles wide that he thinks is truly exotic and is a southerly reach of the Central Maine Terrane. "It is from the other side of the ocean," Zen said. Its outer boundary runs through Fitchburg, Massachusetts, where it is welded to the country east of it by the Fitchburg Pluton, a granite batholith. The country east of it was the Massabesic-Merrimack Terrane (Portsmouth and Nashua and Manchester, New Hampshire; Sturbridge, Massachusetts; Storrs, Connecticut), which also came over the Iapetus Ocean. East of that—and including New London, Connecticut, and Worcester, Massachusetts—was a bent, irregular piece of the world as little as two and as much as seventy miles wide, of which Zen remarked, "God knows where it came from. It's a big enigma. It has no fossil control. It could be delaminated basement of the Massabesic-Merrimack Terrane. It is known as Nashoba." And, finally, through Cape Ann, Salem, Lynn, and Boston, nearly as far west as Worcester, and including Newport, Providence, and Plymouth, was New England's "most distinctly and unequivocally exotic terrane," Atlantica.



Atlantica. Seaward of all the voyaging pieces that had collided in sequence, making mountains, Atlantica differed from the others in a clear and puzzling manner: it was not pervasively deformed. You don't crash head on into a continent and take the shock of the tectonics undeformed. The successive collisions that preceded the arrival of Atlantica, which are collectively known as the Acadian Orogeny, had folded, faulted, and profoundly metamorphosed all the other terranes. In Atlantica, by contrast, even the gas cavities in Precambrian volcanic rocks are undeformed. Tiny shards are recognizable in Precambrian ash. In Atlantica, Zen said, Ordovician plutonic rocks are as fresh as the plutonic rocks of the Sierra Nevada, which are four hundred million years younger. In Atlantica, Silurian-Devonian volcanic and sedimentary rocks are undeformed. "In Acadian time, they were not touched."

"So where was Atlantica during the Acadian events?" I asked him.

He said, "I wish I knew. It's entirely conceivable that at the end of Acadian time you could have walked dry-shod from the Adirondacks to Atlantica—to Boston, but not where Boston is now. It would have been some hundreds of kilometres away; my prejudice would be to the south—a prejudice based on paleomagnetic data."

When the Acadian events were over and the mountains stood high, Atlantica, to remain undeformed, must have come sliding in along a transform fault, like southwestern New Zealand along the Alpine Fault, like southwestern California along the San Andreas Fault. Thus arrived Atlantica, from whose bedrock the ice sheet almost surely plucked up what became Plymouth Rock, and where, in any case, the Mayflower landed.

I said, "If you had to make a choice, where would you say Atlantica came from?"

He said, "Africa."

THE rock reassembled is not a perfect fit, because so much of it is missing. On the seaward side, the walls of the great crack diverge concavely, like a clamshell. Cleaning out the old mortar, Choquette opened a space deep enough to hide a football. When he worked far inside, his entire forearm was in the rock. Also, he removed rotten mortar from the top of the buried portion—the cushioning mattress beneath the two joined segments that are visible to the visiting public. Sparks jumped from the cutting edge of his chisel. The visiting public, now two and three deep around the railings above, had come to Plymouth to see a cold, silent stone and were watching the trajectories of sparks. A man in a bright-red jacket with an American flag on one shoulder snapped the rock with a Japanese camera and said to his wife, "They're looking for fossils."

Plymouth is a red-brick-and-white-clapboard town that has cheerfully shouldered the burdens of its negotiable antiquity. Outside one store, the words "KARATE CHECHI" appear on an eighteenth-century oval wooden sign. Ye Olde Town Crier is some doors away from Hair Illusions. There are houses that were known to the original people (1640, 1666). The streets are neat, the park is attractive under Coles Hill beside the bay, where the rock in the cage reposes. The Mayflower in replica—a hundred and six feet long, a hundred and eighty-one tons, with a very high and narrow stern—floats at a pier nearby: a gift from the City of Plymouth in Devon. Plymouth, Massachusetts, averages something like three thousand visitors a day—ten thousand on Thanksgiving, and scarcely a slack moment in any part of the year. Ruth Walker, a retired science teacher who works for the state as an interpreter of the rock, once told me some of the questions that visitors frequently ask:

"How did he get all those animals on that boat?"

"Where are the Niña and the Pinta?"

"Why doesn't the rock say '1492'?"

"Where is the sword?"

A man once appeared with a boxer on a leash and asked if it would be all right if the dog "marked the rock."

A descendant will blush modestly, rub one Reebok against another, and announce that his name is Howland. With a glance over a shoulder at the hill above the rock, another man says his name is Coles. His billowing sports shirt cannot drape the fact that since 1620 he has eaten very well. A Soule says hello, he's related to George. Descendants seem to appear by the shipload. In their sneakers, their cowboy boots, their leather jackets and one-way shades, they are Fullers, Winslows, Whites, Brewsters, Billingtons, Warrens, Browns, Aldens, and mixed collaterals. Someone tells the story that as Massasoit watched the ship arrive he said, "There goes the neighborhood."

A great many people are disillusioned when they see the size of the rock. At some level of consciousness they have confused it with Gibraltar. If they are asked what they expected, a high percentage of them will actually mention Gibraltar. The extent of the letdown is this: Gibraltar is thirty million times as large as Plymouth's potatolike boulder. Visitors have called it "the biggest disappointment in New England." When Jim Jenkins, of Greensboro, North Carolina, saw it, he said, "I've turned over bigger rocks than this mowing grass."

Don Matinzi, who grew up in Plymouth, said, "I get very defensive about the rock. People ask, 'What did the Pilgrims do, fall over it?' They say, 'It's a pebble.' And so forth. I'd like to have some of these people experience the privation the Pilgrims did. Instead, they ask, 'Where's the sword?' " Matinzi—young, with rimless glasses and brown shoulder-length hair—is an artist, a photographer, and a graduate of the Art Institute in Boston, and helps to support himself as the park supervisor, watching over the rock.

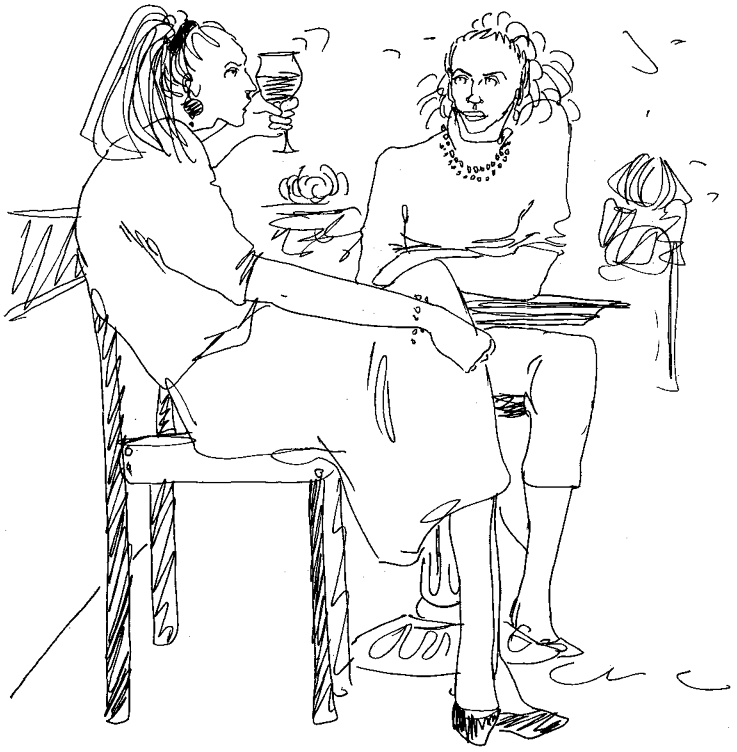
When I asked him one day if he knew of many other erratics bestrewn through the Plymouth woods, he thought for a while and counted few. The great Laurentide Ice Sheet had not, in this region, been generous with large boulders. There was one on Sandwich Road called Sacrifice Rock. It was sacred to the Wampanoags, of whom Massasoit was chief. Even today, offerings will appear from time to time on Sacrifice Rock—handfuls of pebbles, branches of trees. Its actual name is Manitou Asseinah (God's Rock). It sits by the roadside unfenced. When we went to see it, Matinzi said, with some ambiguity, "This is the only rock that does have a history that relates to the area." The boulder had come to rest six and a half miles from Plymouth Rock. Coarse-grained, with large crystals of pink feldspar, it may have derived from greater depth.

Now in Plymouth, as a rising tide was threatening the efforts of Choquette, Matinzi was saying that an amazingly large percentage of the rock's annual visitors were from other nations. Among all the categories of people who come to Plymouth, non-Americans are an even larger group than retired people, schoolchildren, or Mayflower descendants. The cage at the moment was full of children. By the schoolbusload, kids in great numbers had been coming and going all morning: BEDFORD CHARTER SERVICE, BIDDEFORD SCHOOL DEPT, BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Matinzi said, too, that since his own schooldays, in Plymouth, he had seen the rock shrink. "It has shrunk six to ten inches from each end in my lifetime," he remarked. It was Matinzi who had noticed the disintegration of the old patchwork mortar and reported the need for repair.

As Choquette tapped with his chisel, his twelve-year-old, Jonathan, stood with a hand on one end of the rock. He said, "This thing here, Daddy, it's vibrating very much." With a hose, Choquette had from time to time been flushing out the chiselled bed of mortar from beneath the upper half. In his application interview, many weeks earlier, he had told the engineers that he thought the upper and lower halves made such an ill fit that with the rotten mortar gone at least three feet of the upper half would be cantilevered, and now he was proving himself right. He washed out so much mortar that eight inches of space separated a considerable area of the upper rock from the Tory basement. A couple of tons, including the celebrated vertical crack that Choquette was meant to repair, was projecting in air. Jonathan felt the rock rocking. It was obvious now that steel pins or steel staples must be holding the upper part together, for mortar alone could not retain so much suspended weight.

Lest the rock split and crash while the schoolchildren watched, Choquette supported it with riprap from the shore, and refused to continue until the state provided a couple of tons of three-quarter-inch bluestone to pack in as a new bed for the upper rock. The tide was stopping him anyway. Evading the rubber barricade, it came up through the sand. It just developed around his feet and was soon on its way to his knees. Matinzi said that the midday rise the day before had been the highest non-storm tide in years. Today's would be much the same. Choquette climbed out of the cage. By noon, the rock was almost underwater.

ANNE, another merchant ship, arrived in Plymouth in 1623, with something like sixty passengers, one of whom was John Faunce. He remained in Plymouth and raised a family, including a son named Thomas, who was born in 1647. The Old Comers, or First Comers, as the Mayflower people were called, were still very much around, and the young Faunce could not have helped knowing them. Myles Standish died when Thomas Faunce was nine years old, William Bradford when Faunce was ten, John Howland when Faunce was twenty-six, and John Alden when Faunce was forty. By then, Faunce was keeper of the Plymouth records, a job he performed for thirty-eight years. He also became the ruling elder of Plymouth's First Church. His mother's brother, Nathaniel Morton, was the colony historian. Thomas Faunce was what geologists call autochthonous; that is, he originated in



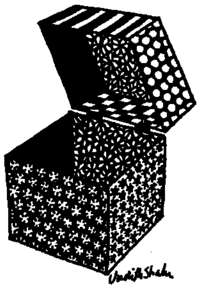
"Wine! Men! Song!"

Plymouth and he never moved. He was literally immobile—enfeebled, ninety-four years old—when the day came that the facts of his life assembled here acquired their collective relevance. Someone told Faunce that the big boulder on the harbor shore would soon be buried.

Faunce had himself driven downtown and carried the final distance sitting in a chair. The chair was set beside the boulder. In 1741, this was enough to attract a crowd. Like the countless thousands of historic objects that would be lost forever in coming years, the rock was scheduled to disappear in the foundations of a wharf. Faunce was there to prevent that. He told his listeners not to forget that this was the landing rock of the Old Comers. They would do well to show it appropriate respect.

Faunce had grown up on this story. And history selected him as the earliest person to mention it. In a hundred and twenty-one years, the boulder's role in the American narrative had in no surviving way been reported to the future. The first-rate and firsthand accounts in "Mourt's Relation" (1622) overlooked it. In a hundred and fifty thousand words William Bradford does not mention it—a fact that would carry more weight if Bradford had mentioned the Mayflower.

A couple of centuries of reverence rest on the hearsay of Thomas Faunce. People who believe in the rock say there is no obvious reason that any of his predecessors *would* mention it. And, besides, it was a Bradford characteristic to be aloof from details. More than twenty times its present size, the boulder was near the edge of the channel; the settlers may have connected it to the shore with planks and used it often. Believers align what few facts they can in a generally positive direction. Skeptics do the reverse. The middle ground does not seem crowded.



The late Samuel Eliot Morison, of Harvard, once Harmsworth Professor of American History at Oxford, and the editor of Bradford's journal (Knopf, 1952), received a letter in 1953 from Rose Briggs, a Plymouth regional historian, asking his help with a monograph she was preparing on the story of the rock. What to say about "the Elder Faunce tradition"? she wrote. "He could have known; he may have been senile. Clearly the town believed him."

By return mail came a note from Morison, written in a hand sufficiently illegible to have qualified him as a physician:

> I see no reason to go back on Elder Faunce now. *The American Neptune* chart of P. Hbr 1780 . . . shows a 1-fm. channel coming up to the shore there. The Rock, at ½ tide could have been a convenient place from which to lay logs or hewn planks to high water mark for a dry landing of people and goods—very important in "that could countrie."
>
> I do hope however that you will point out that the Rock as a landing applies only to Mayflower arriving . . . *not* to the Exploring Expedition. . . .
>
> In an address I shall give to naval officers in Jan. I am going to compare the (hypothetical) logs or planks laid from Rock to shore, to the pontoon causeways we had to use on shelving landing beaches in World War II to land vehicles from LSTs.
>
> Sincerely yours,
> SEMorison

BY two in the afternoon, the tide was in retreat, but the water was slow to leave the cage. It ponded there, higher than the surface of the harbor. Mark Cullinan, in hip waders, went down into the cage to bail out the rock. Paul Choquette, in twelve-inch yellow boots, joined him with another bucket. As they moved about, long microphone booms followed them, sparring over their heads. They were entertaining not only children now but ABC, NBC, CNN, and CBS. One mike was kept in a fixed position close to the top of the rock, not to miss a syllable if the rock had something to say.

When Choquette was able to resume work, he threw coffee into the small cavern he had opened, and watched it drip down the sides. Where mortar remained, the coffee turned the lime green. Choquette went after it with his chisel. Like a dentist doing his best with a split and cavitied tooth, he worked primarily on the inside, where he needed to prepare a clean, dry surface completely free of the old mortar. Jonathan held a flashlight for him, and together they created an odd tableau: a twelve-year-old boy shining a flashlight into the innards of Plymouth Rock while his father knelt beside him with both arms inserted to the elbows.

During this effort far within, the chisel removed a couple of flakes of the rock itself—fractions of an ounce. I asked for the flakes and Cullinan gave them to me. I wanted to take them to geologists at Princeton University and the United States Geological Survey to see what might be learned about the nature and origin of the boulder. In this era, a piece of rock of remarkably small size will serve the purposes of chemical and mineralogical analysis. In 1969, moon rocks as small as pinheads were sent to selected petrologists.

In Princeton, I took a flake to Douglas Johnson, the departmental lapidarian, who removed some crystals and also sawed off a piece of the rock a thousandth of an inch thick. This so-called thin section, mounted on a glass slide and readied for a microscope, was added to a collection of thin sections that Johnson had made from rocks I had gathered in various localities north of Plymouth—Cape Ann, for example, the region of Cohasset, and Kingston, on the edge of Plymouth Bay. Romantically, I hoped for a matchup in the thin sections—for a strong indication of a place or places where the ice sheet could have ripped out the bedrock that it carried to Plymouth, fashioning en route the national boulder.

I sent the entire kit—all the thin sections and a smidgen of Plymouth Rock—to E-an Zen, in Reston. The rock travelled Federal Express, two hundred miles overnight. In the morning, Zen looked at it with a hand lens and a microscope, called me on the telephone, and told me what he saw. First of all, Plymouth Rock was granite. It appeared to be Dedham granite, a major component of the Atlantica Terrane. "I'm convinced that it is a piece of the Dedham," he said. "Where the rock is freshest, the feldspar is distinctly pink, which is characteristic of the Dedham. The thin section shows a wedge-shaped crystal that is brownish blood red. That is a crystal of sphene. The blood-red sphene is distinctive of the Dedham. There are two distinct original feldspars. The potassium feldspar is in a form called perthite, and the plagioclase feldspar has become a highly altered saussurite, rimmed by an inclusion-free zone of sodium-rich plagioclase, all of which is also characteristic of the Dedham."

For reasons unfathomable, I had hoped that one of my numerous samples from the plutons of Cape Ann would match up with Plymouth Rock, like two setts of the same tartan. If so, the boulder could be said to have derived from the bedrock of Gloucester and traversed what is now Massachusetts Bay to come to rest in Plymouth. In Zen's lineup, however, all those samples were clear losers. "The Cape Ann granite contains only one feldspar," he said. "Like the Peabody granite and, for that matter, the Quincy granite. Moreover, they are gray granites. You never see pinkish feldspar in the surface of those granites. Plymouth Rock is not one of them."

He said, incidentally, that the quartz in Plymouth Rock had been "deformed very thoroughly."

I recalled his telling me that the Atlantica Terrane was undeformed.

"Atlantica is shot through with local faults," he said. "Plymouth Rock could have sheared along a fault zone. In almost any outcrop of the Dedham, you can see that. Plymouth Rock is a piece of the Dedham that has deformed in the solid state. This is not a pervasive deformation. It's a local fault, a crushing of the rock rather than a plastic deformation. If you go to Minute Man National Historical Park, where the Battle of Lexington was fought, you see Dedham granite that was very much sheared up in the Bloody Bluff Fault Zone. Plymouth Rock is locally sheared more than usual. Almost surely, when the boulder cracked it broke naturally along a weak zone formed by the shears. That is what the mason was repairing."

Looking further into the Plymouth thin section, he discerned that the biotite in the original granite had been recrystallized in the fault zone, becoming sugary and smoky green. There was also a lot of epidote. He said, "Epidote, saussuritized plagioclase, potassic feldspar, and the presence of sphene are distinctive of late Precambrian granitic rocks in the Boston area, of which the Dedham is an example."

So where did E-an Zen think Plymouth Rock derived from?

He said, "Somewhere between Boston and Plymouth Bay, I would guess. The ice direction was south-southeast. So the rock would have come north by northwest."

Within any large body of granite, there are countless minor variations. Compared with Plymouth Rock, the samples I had taken south of Boston from the Cohasset region through Weymouth to Kingston were close in nature but not identical.

I said, "How far northwest?"

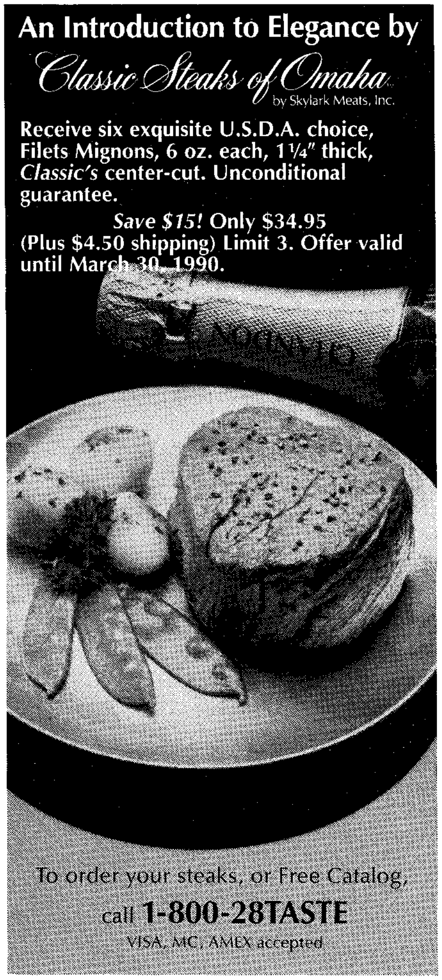
"You cannot go beyond Concord and Lexington, because there you leave Atlantica," he said. "There is no rock like this except in Atlantica. It's a very, very distinctive rock."

PLYMOUTH ROCK AFRICAN

The Dedham granite, Zen added, had been radiometrically dated at six hundred and eight million years. That was when, in some far-distant land, the cooling magma froze as rock—a date that could be looked upon as accurate within seventeen million years.

In Plymouth, that week before Thanksgiving, darkness came early and quickly, and it left the television crews with nothing to see. They departed, but the visiting public kept arriving, even after dusk. They had not come to be on television or to witness the master Choquette. They knew nothing about the repair. They were drawn, like everyone else in all seasons, by the stone that is treasured by a great nation, its very dust shared as a relic. They were surprised, all of them, to find so much activity in a place that ordinarily has the aspect of a tomb. I remember particularly a young man from Florida and his companion, a woman from California, who clambered down the riprap to the harbor shore, the better to peer into the cage. The sound of the chisel was as rhythmic as a drum. The flashlight brightened in the growing darkness. The young man from Florida had shoulder-length gray hair. His friend was a waist-length-waterfall blonde and wore a black leather coat that nearly reached her shoes. He was wearing a Christmas-red sweatshirt decorated with large script that said "Dear Santa, I want it all." Apparently, it all was in Plymouth. He was exuberant. "What luck! What luck!" he kept saying. "What luck to find all this going on! My girlfriend wanted to stop here. I didn't. We argued in the car. She insisted that we come. And I said to her, 'It's a rock! Nothing ever happens to it.' "

—JOHN MCPHEE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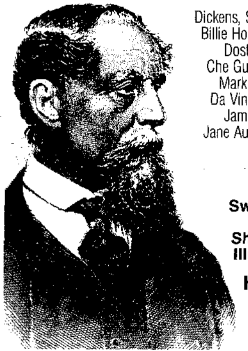
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DANCING

Different

Darci Kistler, a most unusual dancer, is the star of the current New York City Ballet season. Nearly every night, sometimes twice a night, she brings her restorative presence to some ballet of Balanchine's or Robbins'. There's no other presence like it. Other ballerinas are a feast for the eyes; Kistler is a drink for the eyes, a tonic for the senses, instantly inspiriting and ever so mildly psychedelic. With any luck, when you first see her she'll be standing still for an appreciable moment before she begins to move (as in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" or "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet" or "Swan Lake"), and your eyes will have time to get her in focus. Otherwise, the light on her peachy-white skin and red-gold hair may take as much as thirty seconds to adjust to, and meanwhile Kistler is dancing. Because her quality in motion is as effervescent as the mere sight of her, those first thirty seconds are torture. Kistler, that shimmering vision, is *dancing*. But when the vision clears, the pressure to see doesn't end. It even seems that the brighter the light the richer the dancing; Kistler is able to match her dazzling visual impact with a dazzling performance.

Ballerinas are all, by definition, radiant creatures, but they radiate at different intensities. Suzanne Farrell was famous for the sheen of her pallor; "the Alabaster Princess," Balanchine called her. Kistler's aura, like Kyra Nichols', is sunny, but Nichols has the noble-fierce halation of a priestess; Kistler is more impious, more winsome. Each has perils to guard against. Nichols can appear slightly sanctimonious; Kistler when off her stride can look twinkly. This winter, Nichols has danced very little, owing to injury. And Kistler, who has been able to compile what for her is a record number of performances, has not been off her stride at all, at all.

She dances even her moonlit roles—"Swan Lake," the "Symphony in C" Adagio—in the light of day. She doesn't lack mystery—she lacks passivity and self-absorption. At the end of the pas de deux in "Symphony in C," as her partner gently lowers her to the ground she looks him full in the face, including him in her reverie. And she dances the little solo of the allegro interlude in such a transport of joy that we feel its full release and separation from the tone of the Adagio to be the crowning statement of what the Adagio is about: the quickening power of love. Kistler comes alive to herself and to something greater than herself; she leaves us with this enormous emotion, peacefully overflowing. In the "royal" roles of the Tchaikovsky repertory, she's a democrat at heart—the least imperious of Swan Queens, the warmest Sugar Plum. Introduced by her consort to a circle of bowing attendants in "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2," she leaps away before the introductions are completed, as if impatient of court protocol. This is a queen who accepts homage on her own special terms. When, in the second movement, she has to embody the man's vision, to appear and disappear, forever unattainable, Kistler is not only distant but absent, as if being the object rather than the subject of love makes her uncomfortable. She's ideally suited to the playful, childlike temper of the love match in the "Theme and Variations" section of "Suite No. 3." Unfortunately, her only performance, a joint début this season with Jock Soto, could tell us little more than that.

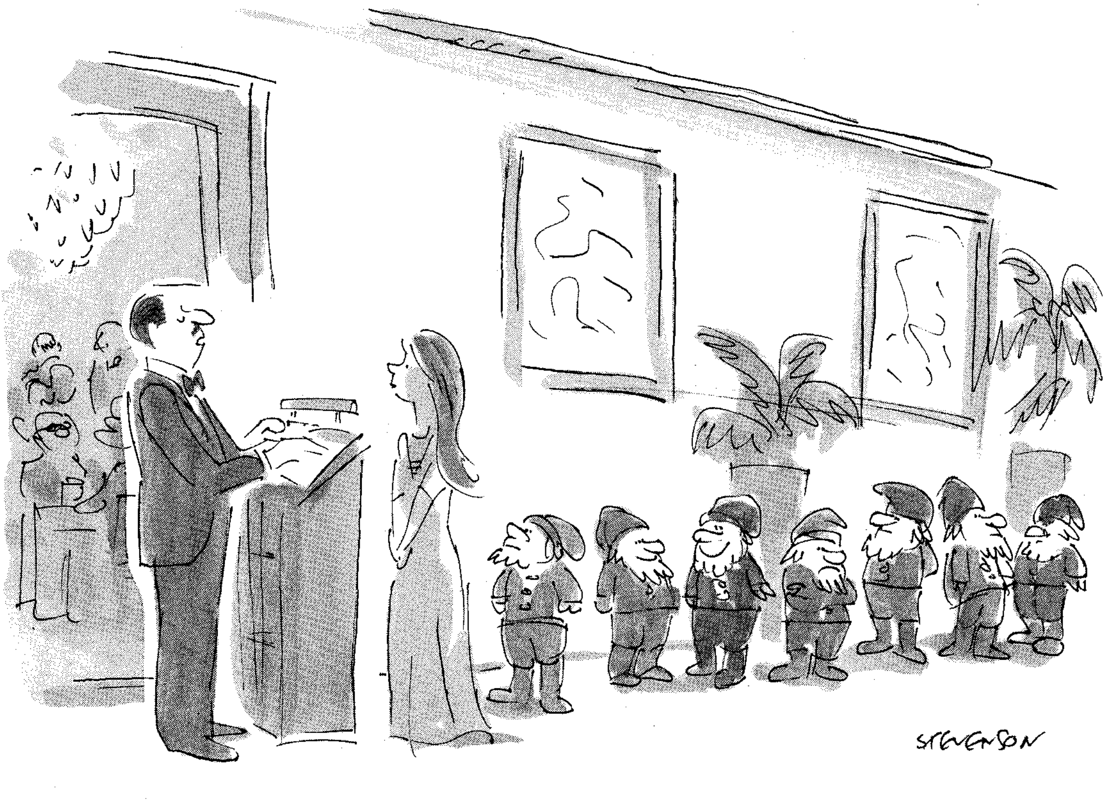
At twenty-five, Kistler is at the peak of her physical beauty and her prowess as a dancer. As a prima ballerina, she's just bursting into bloom; she's starting to open meanings to us. The meanings are unnameable; they're in the shimmer of the spell she casts, in the potency of an illusion. Let me try to be clear. (Kenneth Tynan wrote that what one saw in other women drunk one saw in Garbo sober. He should have gone to the ballet.) Kistler has always been a beautiful, talented, unique dancer, but what she hasn't been until this season is someone whose absolute identification with the life of a ballet we never question. It's a power that goes beyond authority, and only true ballerinas have it. Some ballerinas find the power in a personal fantasy: I'm a child, I'm a dream princess, I'm a betrayed queen. They exist inside a bubble of impersonation. For Balanchine, a ballerina impersonated no one but herself, and had to find herself in music. Music is the element in which the ballerina concentrates her being; she's as inseparable from it as a water nymph is from her fountain. You see her in her element, in her blessed state of transparency, and you feel nothing but pure sensation.

Is there a higher calling in ballet than to be this kind of ballerina? Not only does one have to have a good ear; one has to have the strength and the stamina of a workhorse. And one has to have the will. This season, another very individual dancer, Nichol Hlinka, after years of looking ready and then not so ready, mustered the will to trim off several inches, and emerged with a new, svelte figure. When Nichols had to cancel her début in "Coppélia," Hlinka was given the part, a week after she was promoted to principal dancer. Hlinka is a small, bounding woman, with a characteristically fervent, chocolaty tone to her dancing. Her acting is more dutiful than inspired. As Swanilda, she was bossy with the other girls and sniffy with her boyfriend. In the shuttered laboratory with Coppélius, she was mischievous and ingenious. Only in the last act, where she is free to dance without tending a plot—and dance the zesty coda added by Balanchine to the standard choreography—was Hlinka unequivocally *there*, and even then she didn't look completely herself. For all her saucer-eyed little-girl charm, Hlinka is not a conventional soubrette. Beneath the levity lies a passionate and sombre spirit. One day, she may persuade us that this spirit belongs to Swanilda, but her task will be one of impersonation, and Hlinka has been trained to rely on purely musical instincts.

Hlinka is really in a class by herself. Although she has the looks for old-fashioned ballet heroines, the slightly oddball temperament and expansively lyrical talent point her in other directions. Whether her qualities will now make her a ballerina depends on the parts she gets (she has danced mostly soloist roles) and on Hlinka herself.

There doesn't seem to be much stylistic coaching being done at N.Y.C.B.; the pace at which dancers develop is much slower than it was in Balanchine's day. In some cases—Wendy Whelan, Lindsay Fischer, Melinda Roy, Peter Boal—it has come to a complete halt. Then, there are dancers whose careers are stalled for lack of strong or suitable roles. Why was the quiet-tempered Helene Alexopoulos cast in the Rondo alla Zingarese of "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet"? If the point was to strengthen her technically, surely a less flamboyant vehicle could have been chosen. Meanwhile, "Monumentum/Movements" goes on without her. That conscientious young stylist Jeffrey Edwards gets leads only when other dancers cancel. He's undercast so often that he's starting to compensate by giving overelaborate performances, and he dances far too little Balanchine, so that when he does get a crack at something big, as he did last week, dancing Oberon (after Ib Andersen and then Gen Horiuchi dropped out), he hasn't enough stamina to get all the way through the role's intricacies. Under Peter Martins, the company has turned from a meritocracy into a civil service; it's an equal-opportunity employer. For every dancer with initiative, like Edwards, there are five others who serve time—and still get the parts. The latest in the parade of wooden partners is Robert Hill, who used to show some flair when he was dancing for American Ballet Theatre. Cast opposite Kistler and other principal women, Hill this season performed like a professional escort. He made very little of the Villella variation in "Brahms-Schoenberg" or of the juicy choreography of "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux" and "La Source." Hill doesn't lack grace or technical polish. He's far from being a cipher. We expect more from him precisely because he looks so interesting—he's a hombre. Yet he doesn't dance the way he looks. He has the same identity problem as Hlinka, without Hlinka's will to solve it.

SEVEN years after Balanchine's death, his spirit is receding into the company's routine operations like a face in a picture puzzle: Find this man. The significance of Kistler's progress this season is that she has managed to restore herself thoroughly as a Balanchine ballerina, at the same time building up her Robbins repertory, and she has done it all through instinct. It may seem strange that this cheerful young Californian should harbor so large and luminous a gift for poetic expression, but in Balanchine's world things like this used to happen with regularity. Kistler is a completely usual Balanchinean phenomenon. As a type, she puts you in mind of the genial young women athletes and models and movie actresses of the forties. She has a forties build, broad-shouldered, narrow-hipped, with perfectly proportioned limbs and a high, sweetly poised head. It's not the large head of a forties dancer (Kistler isn't an anachronism), yet it's a rare-for-these-days kind of ballerina head: one that thinks. Watching Kistler, I feel her thinking, even though there's nothing cerebral about her dancing—no calculation (which Balanchine would have abhorred) or cunning, and nothing, either, of the strong-mindedness of a Nichols or a Merrill Ashley. There's just this steady glow of consciousness behind everything Kistler does, a kind of telepathic connection that keeps me alert. She never thinks *ahead*—she is always wholly in and of the moment, but she always knows where she's going, too. And then is as amazed and delighted as we are to find herself actually there. This quality of consciousness is something new in Kistler's dancing. It's very different from the overcontrolled delivery of the performances she gave when she first began dancing again after her injury. It's even different from the experimentation that marked her next phase, for the Kistler who returned to the stage was not quite the same as the Kistler who had left it, and a great deal of her energy went into reconstructing herself as a dancer, finishing onstage what had been begun in Stanley Williams' classroom. Poking around in the repertory, Kistler tried out effects of style to see what belonged to her and what didn't. For about three years, she danced with fascinating insularity. She wasn't following any examples, and she wasn't setting any, either. During



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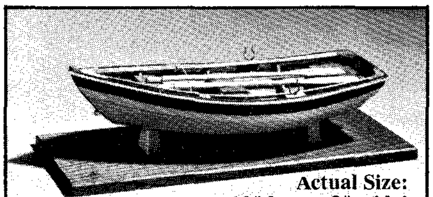

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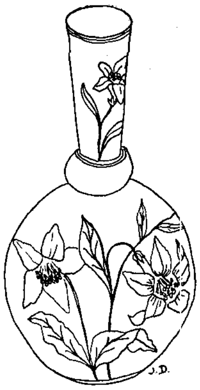
this whole recuperative period, she was in orbit around the company. At times, you caught a glimpse of the new-model Balanchine ballerina she was destined to be. At other times, you saw a ravishingly pretty, charismatic young woman who embellished her roles without adding to what you already knew about them.

Part of the problem was that they weren't *her* roles. "Diamonds" was a Farrell role, redefined by Nichols. Terpsichore in "Apollo" was a role stretched by Farrell, then shrunk by Heather Watts. "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto"—the N.Y.C.B. name for the great "Ballet Imperial"—had been the joint property of Ashley and Nichols. These ballets are by no means closed to Darci Kistler (this season's shots at the "Concerto" were highly encouraging), but they have all been deeply influenced by other anatomies and other technical skills, which are nothing like hers. Farrell, for two decades the prototypical Balanchine ballerina, had narrow shoulders and broad hips with exceptionally loose joints, which allowed her a freedom in the play of her legs that Kistler may never have. For Kistler to become the new prototype, she would have to have roles created for her on the same level as those from which Balanchine fashioned the Farrell prototype. Martins is not only not on Balanchine's level, he also holds a peculiarly confining view of how he worked. Balanchine used to adapt himself to each great new dancer who came to him; he didn't force anyone into a mold. For Martins, clearly, a mold exists, with Farrell the matrix and Watts the stereotype. In a company governed by such a vision, Kistler is always going to be an outsider. Martins' attempts to choreograph for her (the wasteful "The Chairman Dances"; the punitive "Echo") only underscore his inability to accommodate her gifts.



The first sign that Kistler could break down the barrier of precedent came last year, when she danced Farrell's "Mozartiana" on her own terms, not with Farrell's amplitude but with a kind of daredevil grace and color that matched what Farrell had given it. She also appeared in the revival of "Danses Concertantes." In a ballet originally created, in 1944, for Danilova, Kistler's recherché glamour found a perfect frame. Stylistically, the precedent of Danilova (who had coached her in the School of American Ballet "Swan Lake" that she then danced for Balanchine) was right up Kistler's alley: piquant yet grand, elegant in upper-body carriage, sinuous in torsion, and long in the stem (but not as long as Balanchine came to favor later, nor as free-swinging). Kistler's triumphs of 1988-89 put her injury and its aftereffects decisively behind her, and her audience rejoiced: here she was, back at last, the dancer we'd been missing all this time. Did it really matter that she was different, that her feet had changed? (The injury was to her right ankle.) Kistler had always been different—that's what was so interesting about her. And the nervous excitement of her fans all during her recuperative period lay precisely in the fact that we didn't know it *was* her recuperative period until it was over. Speculation rose over how different she would be and had to be in each new role; one felt she'd have refused to conform even if she could have. My own fears for Kistler during this period were that she wouldn't be able to make her dancing big again or integrate the separate beauties of her performances. The rapid piqués chaînés changing speeds and changing arms, for instance—they lit up the stage in ballet after ballet, but they came out of nothing and led nowhere. That Kistler now gives fully integrated performances testifies to the completeness of her physical rehabilitation and the comprehensiveness of its response to her always lively intuition.

The event that best sums up Kistler's achievement is her performance, with Hill, of the Andante in "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet." This was the role in which she was so impressive four years ago—the one that put her back in the picture after her two-year absence. But Kistler didn't have the reserves of strength then that she has today; the performance was a series of precariously held-together moments. The way she dances it now, the Andante is what it never used to be—the highlight of the ballet and one of the highlights of the entire repertory.

Each moment opens breathlessly onto the next, and Kistler has room for spicy shifts of accent and flowingly in-scale port de bras. She also makes one see the resemblance between the martial variation, a parenthetical exclamation set into the body of the music, and the allegro break in the Adagio of "Symphony in C." The choreography for the Brahms has more sweep, more sheer acreage than that for the Bizet. Kistler finds its "through" line and dances it so magnificently that you seem to see her everywhere on the stage at once, in multiple exposure. And that's nothing compared to the infinite lift and momentum that you feel. A friend of the company said, "Dancing just doesn't get better than this." I wonder. Kistler has astonished us so many times this season, there's no reason to think she won't go right on doing it.

The sole première this winter was of a new work by Richard Tanner, who is strongly rumored to be in line for a staff appointment. Long sets of decorous posings and groupings by endless numbers of dancers in endless assortments of costume, intervals of predictable duetting (Watts-Soto, Roy-Boal), all *très classique* and all staged to Mozart's "Prague" Symphony, when some nice Kern or Porter would have done just as well. Tanner, like so many choreographers nowadays, turns out discount Balanchine as a matter of course. Don't they ever stop and look around? This is the fourth Mozart ballet we've had since Balanchine died. (And the fifth since Mozart died.) The idea that one might follow Balanchine's precepts without imitating his style doesn't seem to interest our ballet-makers. The more slavish their work, the more they threaten to reduce him to a cultural piety. Like Mozart. —ARLENE CROCE

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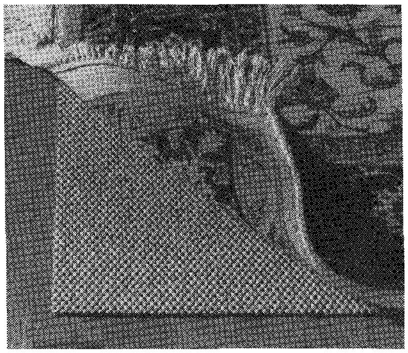

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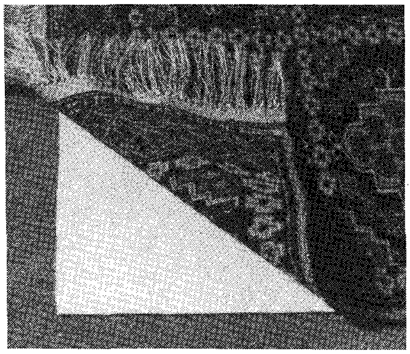

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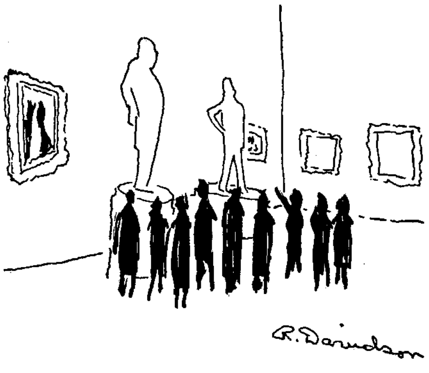
THE ART WORLD

Optimist

IN the last half century, the visions of the English painter Francis Bacon have entered the prop room of the modern imagination: the screaming pope, the small, damaged figure racing on the polished tracks, the exhausted naked man curled up under the glare of a single unshaded bulb. Bacon's admirers range from Graham Greene (who has compared the lengthy, sepulchral interviews that Bacon has given over the years to the journals of Delacroix) to Bernardo Bertolucci, whose "Last Tango in Paris" used Bacon's paintings of doglike couplings and hung-over aftermaths as backdrops. For an entire European generation, Bacon's art provides a model of sexual agony: desire expressed as rage, experienced as pain, and ending in isolation. Bacon, now eighty, has become a pop figure, too: in the film "Batman," the Joker visits the Gotham art museum and destroys every painting there except a Bacon. A lot of people, perhaps as a consequence of Bacon's popularity, are inclined to see him as a ham, someone who produces the kind of macabre modernism that only a cartoon villain could love. And some critics maintain that Bacon has never really cast off a love of décor—he began as a designer of glass-and-chrome coffee tables and of throw rugs—and has become a Grand Guignol artist with a line in stage blood and limelighted horrors.

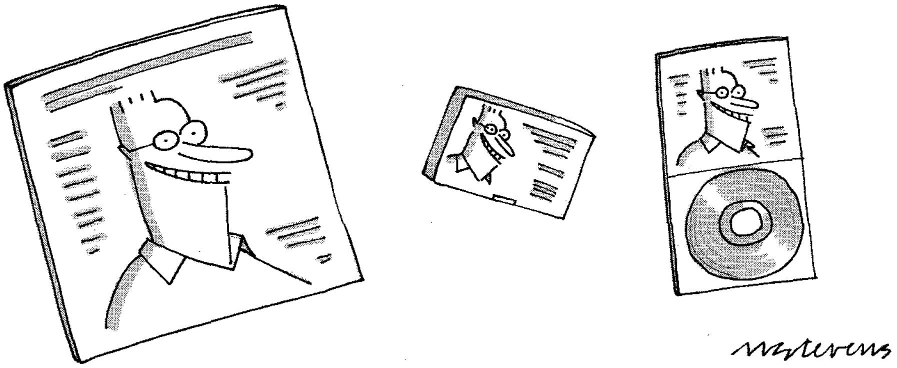
A retrospective exhibition of Bacon's paintings has been touring the United States; it was at the Hirshhorn Museum, in Washington, through early January, is now in Los Angeles, and will arrive in New York, at the Museum of Modern Art, in the late spring. The exhibit, curated by James Demetrion, and including more than sixty pictures, shows that Bacon, when seen whole, stands completely outside the Gothic-and-Expressionist tradition to which critics most often attach him. His resolved and mannered painting conveys no sense of an attempt to take away the masks of social roles and reveal a primal human condition, nor is there even a distant, formal echo of the austere, dried-blood palette of Munch or the pointed, barbed-wire bodies of Beckmann and Kirchner. Bacon's gold-framed figural paintings, with their recessive enclosing spaces and their insistently smooth, curving patterns of looping brush marks and whorling paint, every knee or elbow rounded off like a neat sum, work entirely within a late-classical tradition of rhetorical pathos. His stylized agonies look back to the swooning martyrdoms of Counter-Reformation painting and, beyond them, to Michelangelo's "Slaves" and to the attenuated sufferers of Pergamene altars. Bacon's announced desire to "paint the scream rather than the horror"—to convey feeling rhetorically, even sentimentally—might have lacked all intensity had it not been for his unsettling discovery that this old rhetoric of suffering could be married to the little voluptuous sensations of French luxury painting. Bacon's interiors, with their high-keyed coloring and purple shadows, descend from Matisse rather than Munch.

The power of Bacon's pictures depends on the surrender to the decorative, which is sometimes supposed to be their weakness; his art attains its intensity by confronting the moral ambiguity in the aesthete's undifferentiating eye. If this marriage of glamour and suffering can at its weakest and most grandiose make Bacon seem no more than the Arthur Rackham of the Age of Anxiety—a lush illustrator with a taste for spooky effects—Bacon at his best is a painter of beautiful indoor martyrdoms that become tragic because they lack any accompanying system of belief to make them exemplary. In his best paintings, most of which date from a short period in the mid-nineteen-fifties, and especially from 1953, a vintage year, Bacon manages to focus this marriage of formulaic pathos and near-at-hand sensation into an intensely particularized vision of English misery—a large expense of spirit in a small, confining waste of blue-gray drizzle and blinds and hotel rooms and back gardens—and to make an art that is poised weirdly and yet with complete authority somewhere halfway between the Laocoön and Philip Larkin.



The dialogue between décor and damnation in Bacon's art began very early. The so-called armatures of Bacon's mature paintings—the polished rails and tubular enclosures that so often encircle his figures—are in fact hallucinatory enlargements of his early glass-and-bent-chrome chairs and tables: small elegancies turned into metaphors of imprisonment. Bacon, rather than being an inventor of form, is first of all an inspector of the buried horror that resides in glamorous images. His earliest major painting (many of his works from the thirties are lost), the famous "Screaming Pope," of 1953, depends for its structure on the marriage of two high-gloss reproductions: one of Bacon's many postcards of Velázquez's portrait of Innocent X (whose original he has not yet seen) superimposed on a movie still of the screaming woman from the Odessa-steps sequence of Eisenstein's "Potemkin." The palimpsest is made powerful by the way Bacon melts the two found images together with a Monet-like liquefaction, so that Velázquez's intense description of surfaces is transformed into a soft, runny unity.

The rituals of appetite, the relentless attempt to dress up in the costumes of social life the craving for sex and power and anesthetics, became Bacon's obsessive subject. This sense that the free and seemingly unstructured hedonism of modern urban life—the world of "arts and leisure," as that strange pairing still has it—could be understood with an almost anthropological detachment as a set of enforced, and even primitive, rituals had previously been achieved in painting only by Degas, in his images of the rites of the ballet and the racecourse. And it is from the late Degas pastels of ballet rehearsal that the surfaces of Bacon's paintings of the late forties and early fifties derive. But if Degas's touch—his dark violets and green pastels and



ROBERT P. (ALL THREE FORMATS)

his thrumming, repetitive stroking—could be taken over organically by Bacon, his figure drawing was beyond Bacon's limited powers as a draftsman and, anyway, was too subtle for Bacon's melodramatic needs. Bacon's imagery of the human body therefore derived from Degas's contemporary the photographer Muybridge, whose stop-action pictures of nude men wrestling and walking and dancing raised the anthropological detachment implicit in Degas to an almost pathological degree.

In the early fifties, Bacon began to collect Muybridge's photographs and use them as a source, and in the awkward, anonymous grapplings and frozen choreography of Muybridge's wrestlers he found a way to picture homosexual passion. The current exhibition, though it lacks such famous and intense Bacons as the so-called "Buggerers," does include what is in some ways the most powerful of all Bacon's images of copulation as contest: "Two Figures in the Grass," of 1954. The picture is divided into an aggressively abstract pattern of flat horizontal bands: purple-black at the base, then the two men in the grass, and, above, not sunshine or sky but a black-on-white box of skeletal bars. The picture's layout uncannily resembles that of certain American abstract paintings of the same period, and shares with American abstraction a source in French Fauve landscape. But Bacon has taken the even, all-over space that Rothko and Matisse share and broken it sharply at a right angle, so that it becomes an enclosing diorama—the landscape of pleasure reimagined as the topography of pain. The copulating men have the inarticulate shape and purple mottledness of hung game, and yet within this shape one suddenly makes out a clear and beautiful face upturned in ecstatic pleasure.

For all the ritual genuflection to Eliot and Yeats on which Bacon's admirers insist, it is Auden (whose early biography in many ways duplicates Bacon's own, including a year spent in Berlin in the late nineteen-twenties) who provides a real parallel for Bacon's erotic imagery. Auden's love poetry of the thirties and forties first articulated the sense, which Bacon's art illustrates, that the beleaguered intensity of homosexual experience could become the harbinger of a new tragic consciousness. Where for other British painters who came of age in the fifties (Hockney is the most obvious example) the model was Isherwood's elaboration on Wilde—the sense that the enforced isolation of the homosexual experience could combine ironic detachment with moral gravity—Bacon's art descends from the tragic vision of Auden's "Lullaby": "Lay your sleeping head, my love, Human on my faithless arm." Auden's idea was that a life lived without an accepted public face—lived, under compulsion, in fear and fragments—could nonetheless feel its way toward an essential truth about love which was elsewhere anesthetized by the elaborate panoply of domestic ritual. All sex is, as sex, anonymous, Auden and Bacon alike suggest; what the homosexual experiences under duress is close to the real nature of desire. The blurrings and generalizations of Bacon's paint in his erotic pictures—faces smeared on in a single swipe of the loaded brush—are meant to have the same effect that the burning away of given names and clear pronouns has in Auden's love poetry: they suggest enforced anonymity as a near relation to romantic universality.

THE screaming pope and the secret lovers define the two poles of Bacon's grim vision: the scream as psychotic rage bursting through the top of the social order, and the coupling as erotic energy released furtively at its base. Too often in his art, particularly during the nineteen-sixties, when he became fashionable, Bacon has just elaborated on and embroidered those two extreme images. Yet for a moment in the fifties—especially in 1953—he managed to create a kind of electric field between the poles of unassuageable rage and raw consummation, and produced his greatest and most humane pictures by looking at ordinary things that, caught in this field, were suddenly charged with an unexpected magnetism.

Bacon's paintings of the fifties are filled with respectable-looking men in suits: they wait on benches, nurse headaches, curl up on hotel-room beds, tie their ties in the morning mirror. On one level, of course, they are simply the organization men—the conformists trapped in a conventional armor, who fill so much of the literature and art of the period—and in part Bacon wants to show them as convicts, captives. But Bacon's men in suits are also the English middle-class cousins of Magritte's expressionless businessmen and grave bowler-hatted detectives; their function is to act as trustworthy-looking ushers into a nightmare world of metamorphosis. In Bacon's interiors of the period, beds become racks, bedsteads turn into prison grilles, and hotel rooms are detention chambers. Yet all this happens with so little hocus-pocus that one comes away with a sense less of Surrealist magic than of simple observed truth.

In Bacon's 1953 "Study for a Portrait," for instance, we see at first a middle-aged man sitting on a bed in a hotel room. He is facing front, double-chinned, wearing a good blue suit with notched lapels and a white shirt with a loosened tie; you can see the curtains

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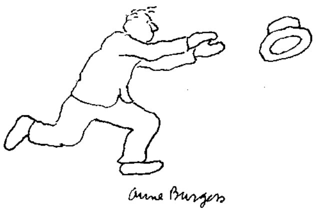
open behind his head, revealing a bare brick wall across an airshaft. But his face is obscured by a rain of black paint that falls in bars from the ceiling—a kind of abstract echo of the bars on the bedstead—and his mouth is open in a horrible lopsided grimace: a self-conscious, shamed version of the pope's full-out scream. His expression is in some ways intimate and confiding—the look on the face of a salesman telling a dirty joke to friends—but it is painted with such intensity, the teeth unnaturally bright, the jaw forced open at a nutcracker angle (the mouth, in fact, is an image taken from a manual on oral disease), that it becomes grotesque. Then, as the picture's beautiful dark orchestration of blacks and violets and browns begins to resolve into discrete forms, it becomes plain that the bed is really a kind of torture device; that the man's torso and single, upturned leg have no natural relation to each other; and that he has no hands. Perhaps agony has a different home in every nation and in England hell is what happens in little rooms. That sense of enclosure, of being stranded in the twilight city—it's the reverse side of the English cult of coziness—finds a stronger, if necessarily strangled, voice in Bacon's painting of the fifties than it does in any other art. Bacon's "universal room," as John Russell calls it, is the miserable, lulling hotel room that is around the corner from Larkin's bed-sit in Hull and Joe Orton's flat in Islington.



Bacon lives in a state of pain but not a state of anger. Unlike the other great painters of misery—unlike Schiele or van Gogh—he is an intensely social artist. In his double portrait of his friends the painters Lucian Freud and Frank Auerbach, both men are shown naked save for white T-shirts, and are reclining on cherry-red sling chairs against a clean, green-and-beige Matisse interior. Though these are identifiable portraits, the faces of the two men have the same equine cheekbones and hollowed-out eyes of every other Bacon sitter. But this style, for all its apparent aggression, is not really "distorting." Most of Bacon's faces, once one accepts his painterly shorthand, are, in fact, extremely beautiful in a conventional way: high cheekbones, perfect coifs, strong, muscular necks, and sculptured chins—Bruce Weber models in stocking masks.

Bacon is almost aphasic in his lack of pictorial invention. From this aphasia comes the relentless scrutiny that he has given his storehouse of secondhand imagery. But when he feels compelled to invent something new he often reaches back, unconsciously, to a secondhand form that he does not quite know is secondhand: when he draws on his own imagination he comes up, unintentionally, with cartoons. The big diptychs and triptychs on which a great deal of his fame depends always suffer from a lack of original shapes, and from a compensatory overaccentuation in their drawing. The famous "Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion," of 1944, for instance (which appears in the exhibition in a replica the artist painted just two years ago), is for many people Bacon's breakthrough painting, the one in which he announced the iconic, altarpiece-like format that would be repeated again and again in his later work. It is in its way an impressive picture: three huge panels with the Three Furies represented, against a ceremonial background of blood-red cloths of honor, as blind, limbless, pigeon-colored polyps screaming to the Fates. The longer one looks at the picture, however, the more unintentionally comic it can seem—particularly the central Fury, who bears an uncomfortable resemblance to Thurber's drawing of the ghoul in "The Night the Ghost Got In."

Most of the diptychs and triptychs only reaffirm that Bacon's real genius lies in portraiture and in domestic interior. The best of them are the most intimate, notably the "Triptych—May-June 1973," in which the suicide of Bacon's lover George Dyer is depicted in three oblique images. All three panels are seen from a brightly lit beige corridor looking into a black bathroom: Dyer curled up in a fetal position on the toilet; Dyer's head, in a blurred double exposure, beneath a naked light bulb with a bat-shaped shadow penetrating out into the hall; Dyer's eyes serenely closed as he bleeds into a sink. It may seem odd to talk about the aesthetics of such an image, but the point is that it has been intensely aestheticized by the artist. And it is painted with enormous pleasure—the curled-up muscular body coiling and uncoiling like a ferret, the controlled, one-touch, serpentine arabesques that define the powerful haunch and the heroic back as confidently as those in a Matisse odalisque. A didactic white arrow is superimposed on the left- and right-hand panels, pointing almost sardonically at the dying man. (These arrows, Bacon's favorite distancing device, are sometimes explained as merely formal ways of preventing the viewer from reading the image too literally. In reality, they do just the opposite, and insist that one treat the image as hyperexemplary, as though it came from a medical textbook.) The grief in the painting is intensified by the coolness of its layout and the remote detachment of its gaze. It has been Bacon's insight that it is precisely such seeming detachment—the rhetoric of the documentary, the filmstrip, and the medical textbook—that has provided the elegiac language of the last forty years.

This pained, detached gaze Bacon also turns on himself. In a triple self-portrait, painted in 1985, Bacon is seated on a small, low-backed revolving stool—a generalized example of the kind of pure modern design with which his career began. He turns, repositions himself, clasps his hands again. The room is full of a beautiful pure-white light, and Bacon is alone against a background of olive and cream—perfect, austere good taste. In the left panel, half of the painter's head is atomized into a red mist, a little red arrow pointing at his mouth. It is, from one point of view, horrific, almost like a frame from the Zapruder film of the Kennedy assassination. Pain, violence, death itself are all held in quotes. Watching the painter turn and shift, you sense that he is always only a half turn away from comfort, contentment—*happiness*—in the beautiful studio with the handsome little stool.

The pessimism of Bacon's vision leaves it disengaged from any modernist context of "progress" or advance, and this is one source of its strange equanimity, even of a certain serenity. It sometimes seems that in the work of artists like Bacon, poets of the void, all that remains is the problem of beauty. But maybe for Bacon one of the pleasures of the void is that beauty is no longer quite such a problem—something to be worried over and reinvented each time. If one really feels this way about life, the old vanguard desire to invent new forms, to "make a contribution," must seem like the most absurd vanity of all. In Bacon, a stream of beautifully patterned sensation pours out—sensation that, having no particular need to justify itself, is remarkably generous and unaustere. By contrast, even in Philip Guston's famously disillusioned figurative painting, with which Bacon's strikingly shares a set of properties—the naked light bulb, the studio as cell, the alcoholic haze, and the stoic detachment—there is always an edge of puritanism, an austerity of tone and purpose, and a desire to advance modern style and to make a point.

"I am optimistic about nothing," Bacon says simply, and that is not at all the same thing as being pessimistic about everything. For the other late-modern artists with whom Bacon is most often grouped, Beckett and Burroughs, the fact of meaninglessness was something that had to be preached with the severity of an early Church Father. With Bacon, the only obligation is the obligation to sensation itself. If there is despair in this vision, there is something else in it, too: something that can't possibly be called "affirmation" but includes an obstinate allegiance to the fact of the body and the primacy of its appetite—a belief that the life of the body, for good or ill, *is* life. It is the oddly fixed faith that there is some value in cataloguing physical life in all its exhausting and grungy needs and betrayals which lets Bacon go on painting. This emotion has nothing upbeat in it; there's no silver lining save for a stubborn and unsordid faithfulness to the integrity of its own position. Bacon reminds you in the end of Dante's steadfast Epicureans, whose tombs in the Inferno are left unguarded, because everybody knows they would never abandon their exhausted mortal bodies even if God let them.

—ADAM GOPNIK

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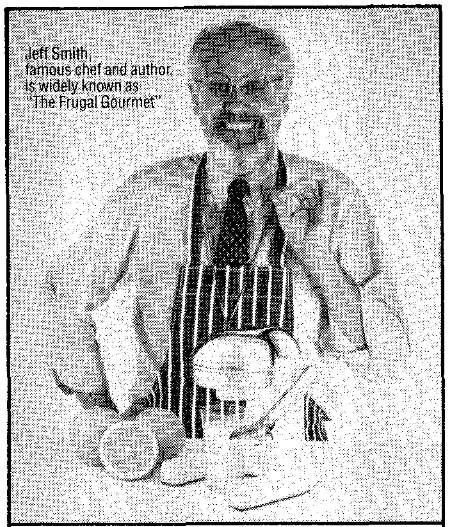
BOOK REVIEW TYPO: A sentence in Elaine Kendall's review of "The Luxury of Tears: Winning Stories From the National Society of Arts and Letters Competition" last week said, "Everyone lies in a university town" instead of "Everyone lives in a university town."—*Los Angeles Times*.

Noted.



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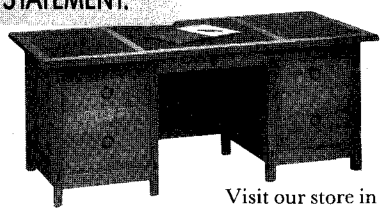

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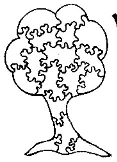

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BOOKS

The Flaming Chalice

So-Called science fiction has been around long enough, abundantly and variously enough, so that not even a thousand-and-seventy-five-page, three-pound anthology like "The World Treasury of Science Fiction," edited by David G. Hartwell (Little, Brown; $29.95), offers a launching platform broad enough for generalizations that will really fly. Mr. Hartwell, in assembling what his introduction calls "the largest and most ambitious collection of science fiction from all over the world ever compiled," limited himself to "the modern period, 1939 to the present." Even so, one doesn't have to be an expert to notice omissions. Of the pre-Second World War "Golden Age," centered on the pulp magazines *Amazing Stories* and *Astounding Stories*, selections by *Astounding's* editor, John W. Campbell, Jr., and John Berryman (not the poet) are included, but nothing by A. E. Van Vogt, whom Mr. Hartwell in one of his headnotes calls "the wildest, least polished, and most aggressively creative of the 1940s Campbell writers." Another writer alluded to often enough to pique our interest but not represented in the anthology is the "New Wave" fantasist Roger Zelazny. Kurt Vonnegut is present, but not William Burroughs. Calvino and Borges are here, but not, of those with international literary reputations who have been attracted to science fiction of a sort, Nabokov and Doris Lessing. Though Arthur C. Clarke, J. G. Ballard, and Brian Aldiss are included, nothing is said of that vein of British dystopian prophecy which produced books famous far beyond the confines of S.F. devotees—Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-four" and Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World." C. S. Lewis's peculiar Christian strain of S.F., which led to Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" and a whole galaxy of mystical never-never lands, receives mention but no space here. And the transition from the sacred ancestors Poe, Verne, and Wells to the state of the art in the late nineteen-thirties is left to our already overexercised imaginations.

The fifty-two pieces chosen for inclusion range in date from 1937 (not 1939) to 1986; in length from brief gems by Calvino and Stanislaw Lem to a sixty-page saga by the Russian brothers Arkady and Boris Strugatsky; and in original language from English and French to Polish, Dutch, Norwegian, and Japanese. The order is not chronological, but describes a wandering course from the nuts-and-bolts adventure tales of the Campbell pre-computer era, through assorted fancy software (transplanted consciousnesses, cloned identities, time travel, futures that look like the past, S.F. feminism, S.F. self-satire, etc.), back to nuts-and-bolts adventure, this time in Russian. One reads along, day after day, as the light-years pile up outside the window, entertained by the shifting angles of thrust, and curious as to the next comet to swing around the corner. There is some lumpy prose and strung-out dialogue in the penny-a-word pulp manner; see, for example, the tales by C. M. Kornbluth, Frederik Pohl, Isaac Asimov, and Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore, or savor such sentences as "A kind of glazed incredulity kneaded his face into a mask of shocked granite wearing a supercilious moustache" and "It was not only that patina of perfection that seemed to dwell in every line of their incredibly flawless garments." The editor, however, has kept the over-all literary quality high, and his knowledgeable headnotes convey enthusiasm. His categories—"Golden Age," "New Wave," "speculative fiction," "alternate universe SF," "post-New Wave," and even "post-New Wave hard science fiction"—ramify a bit luxuriantly, and his critic-ese can overheat:

> In the late 1960s Larry Niven appeared and held the center ground in science fiction just as the excesses and excitement of the New Wave were dominating critical discourse. . . . [His] traits have made him in a sense the sea anchor of the field at a time when storms of change have ravaged the surfaces of SF and the demand for rounded characterization and stylistic play has tended to devalue traditional approaches.

But we are in the hands of a loving expert, and his thousand-plus chosen pages constitute an excellent text to have in hand while asking oneself the crucial question: "What keeps science fiction a minor genre, for all the brilliance of its authors and apparent pertinence of its concerns?"

The short answer is that each science-fiction story is so busy inventing its environment that little energy is left to be invested in the human subtleties. Ordinary, "mainstream" fiction snatches what it needs from the contemporary environment and concentrates upon surprising us with details of behavior; science fiction tends to reverse the priorities. The crew of the spaceship of John Berryman's classic "Special Flight" could come from the mixed ethnic bag of the war movies that Hollywood, in 1939, was poised to crank out. Stoic, jokey, constantly lighting cigarettes, these spacemen seem to be in a rusty tough old tanker, dodging icebergs instead of meteors. They do not feel perilously poised within the extreme thinness of space; they never confront the real practical problem of space flight—weightlessness. Of course, we know from newspapers and television what space travel is like, and Berryman did not. The Soviet brothers Strugatsky, as of 1959, knew a thing or two, yet their space travellers, in "The Way to Amalteia," amid all the beautifully worked-out technicalities of extricating themselves from the grip of Jupiter's gravity, and the titanic scenic effects its heavy, turbulent atmosphere would likely make, are shopworn socialist heroes, a touch too good to be true. Announcing their apparent doom, Captain Bykov bluntly tells them, "We've lived well, and we'll die well." They are heroes in a very special can—"a first-class photon freighter with a parabolic reflector that resembled a skirt, with a round living gondola and a disk-shaped freight section, with cigarlike emergency rockets on long supports"—but it is canned heroism nevertheless. The captain, our gruff but friendly Soviet superhero, will predictably pull us through, land the damaged ship, and save the population of J-Station on the planetoid Amalteia from famine, declaring with gallant understatement, "Comrade Kangren, the spaceship *Takhmasib* has arrived with its cargo."

Robert A. Heinlein's "The Green Hills of Earth" (1947) and Walter M. Miller, Jr.,'s "The Lineman" (1957) offer American versions of good guys getting the dirty job done. It is perhaps not entirely accidental that a Czech, from a nation long subject to larger nations' heroisms, contrived, in Josef Nesvadba's "Captain Nemo's Last Adventure" (1964), an ironical version of the rocket hero. This tender parody, whose central adventure has a giant spaceship of protozoalike extraterrestrials frantically demanding of our aging, hagridden hero an "answer to the fundamental question of life," finds its resolution in poetry and music and an end of technical progress: rocketry and exploration are carried on in the new world by robots indistinguishable from flesh-and-blood heroes. True enough, many of the characters in science fiction might as well be robots.

And, of course, many of them are. In this anthology, robots figure as servants ("The Golem," by Avram Davidson), tutors ("The Fifth Head of Cerberus," by Gene Wolfe), constant companions and enforcers of social order ("Codemus," by Tor Åge Bringsvaerd), sexual partners ("Pairpuppets," by Manuel van Loggem), and implacable warriors ("Second Variety," by Philip K. Dick). Robots rebel against their human masters ("The Proud Robot," by Lewis Padgett) and fall in love with them ("Stranger Station," by Damon Knight). The uncertain line between men and machines, one of our century's philosophical sore spots, fascinates science fiction. In Arthur C. Clarke's "A Meeting with Medusa," the hero is revealed to be a formerly human pilot so badly damaged in a crash that his body was almost entirely replaced with mechanical elements. In John Varley's "The Phantom of Kansas," human identities are preserved in recording cubes; an often-murdered woman is just as often reprogrammed into a new body and, discovering that her assailant is a male incarnation of herself, makes mad love with him: "We were made for each other, literally. It was the most astounding act of love imaginable. He knew what I liked to the tenth decimal place, and I was just as knowledgeable. . . . Call it masturbation orchestrated for two." In Ursula K. Le Guin's "Nine Lives," workers are cloned in multiple teams, with sex differences only; they make love as part of their pooled activity, and can hardly function apart from one another. In the Colombian René Rebetez-Cortes's "The New Prehistory," one of the weirder pieces in this book, a movie line becomes a kind of centipede, and urban clusters of people merge into giant organisms. In vain the narrator protests, "I don't want to find myself transformed into something shapeless like an amoeba or a glob of spittle, nor to become the last segment of a gigantic worm. I cling to my human identity, my own individual and separate personality." In Robert Bloch's "I Do Not Love Thee, Doctor Fell," a press agent who feels his head invaded by others' phrases—"I'm losing myself. There's no real *me* left"—becomes, or already is, his own psychiatrist, a certain Doctor Fell.

The alterations that psychiatry, geology, astronomy, evolutionary biology, anthropology, microscopy, theoretical physics, and computer technology have worked upon Man's self-image: science fiction is willing to face these head on. Man inhabits history; human nature changes. "Advancing technology, fashion, frontiers, taste, or morals can make the best of us obsolete overnight," says the heroine of "The Phantom of Kansas." If a number of these hypothetical tales seem populated by old-fashioned characters, other stories do attempt to show humanity transformed, as well as the furniture of technology. Joanna Russ's "Nobody's Home" makes the point, with a Chekhovian casualness, that in the improved future there may be no place for the ordinary human being. A stocky, self-confessedly "stupid" female called Leslie Smith is assigned to an ethereal, playful commune in the Himalayas, a heightened version of the counterculture still thriving in 1972, when the story was written. This outsider's docile but unmistakable ordinariness is like a crack in a perfect crystal, leading the heroine, the lovely and brilliant Jannina, to tears:

> "This life!" gasped Jannina. "This awful life!" The thought of death became entwined somehow with Leslie Smith, in bed upstairs, and Jannina began to cry afresh.

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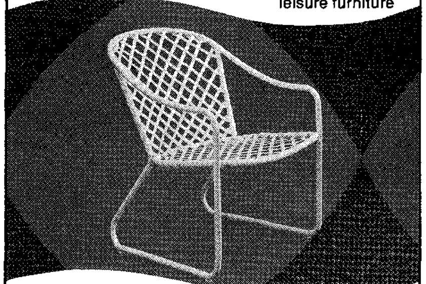

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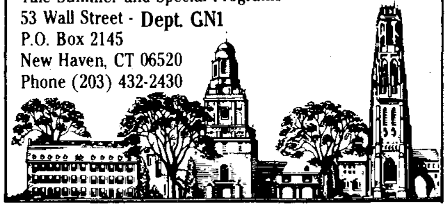

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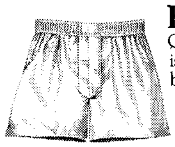

ner and C. L. Moore, the people of the future, clad in their "incredibly flawless" garments, have discovered the secret of time travel and become tourists in time, on a package that includes, in order, Chaucer's Canterbury in 1347, a cataclysmic meteor in the United States any day now, and the coronation of Charlemagne in Rome at Christmastime in 800. Forbidden to tamper with the past and thus possibly spoil their own pleasure-seeking present, they are as basically vapid and cruelly removed as geographical tourists now. Two separate stories, C. M. Kornbluth's "Two Dooms" and Keith Roberts's "Weihnachtsabend," portray a grim future in which the Axis powers triumphed in the Second World War. Gene Wolfe's "The Fifth Head of Cerberus" and Brian Aldiss's "A Kind of Artistry" immerse us in futures of a medieval eeriness, of looming castles and riddling foreordinations. More regressive still, Boris Vian's "The Dead Fish" presents a glutinous future so degraded that nothing makes sense, at least to me; Vian, a French translator of A. E. Van Vogt, is likened by the editor to William Burroughs, and seems to take us into the savage world of Jarryesque farce:

> Then she tucked up her little pleated skirt, and from where she stood she saw the boss's face turn violet, then completely black, then begin to burn, and as he kept his eyes fixed on what she was showing him, he tripped over the garden hose that he used to drown the rats; he fell with his face against a large stone, which fitted itself precisely between his cheekbones, in place of his nose and jaws. His feet stayed behind on the ground and dug a double trench, where, little by little, according to the rate at which his shoes wore out, could be seen the trail of five clumsy toes, which served to keep his socks on.

The hallucinatory transformations in Anthony Burgess's "The Muse" are rooted, it would seem, in a minute unsteadiness whereby the past expresses its resentment at being invaded from the future. Paley, a Shakespeare scholar visiting the Elizabethan era, feels that even the stars "had done a sly job of refiguration, forming fresh constellations like a sand tray on top of a thumped piano." Shakespeare himself is the Droeshout engraving, with moving lips and then worse: "The face grew an elephantine proboscis, wreathing, feeling; two or three suckers sprouted from its end and blindly waved towards Paley."

The presence in the volume of such thoroughly literary imaginers as Burgess, Calvino, and Borges, with the subtly but distinctly different flavor their contributions afford, points up a qualitative limitation. In confronting Man's transformation by accumulating technology, and in enlarging upon such striking developments as the atomic bomb and computerization, science fiction makes us stop and reflect and identify theoretical issues, but it rarely persuades and involves us the way the quietest realistic fiction can. The writer of non-fantastic fiction, wishing to pique his reader's interest, naturally gravitates to "news," to incidents and details that seem novel. These details unprogrammatically trace the changes in the human condition from one generation to the next. The pieties that bind up the universe of Dickens and Trollope dissolve around the characters of Henry James, to their dismay and ours. Hemingway's hero discovers that *gloire* and other patriotic catchwords mean nothing to him, and that after a loved one dies one merely walks back to the hotel in the rain. Conventional morality, conventional propriety, conventional feeling are always being outgrown, and, with them, artistic conventions. "The writer," Edmund Wilson wrote, "must always find expression for something which has never yet been expressed, must master a new set of phenomena which has never yet been mastered." Those rhapsodies, for instance, which Proust delivers upon the fresh inventions of the telephone, the automobile, and the airplane point up the larger relativities and magical connections of his great novel, as well as show the new century breaking upon a fin-de-siècle sensibility. The modest increments of fictional "news," of phenomena whose presentation is unprecedented, have the cumulative weight of true science—a nudging, inching fidelity to human change ultimately far more impressive and momentous than the great glittering leaps of science fiction.

Speculative leaps, the spectacle of the never-seen: these are what attract and dazzle and in the end weary us in science fiction. Aristotle placed spectacle last in his list of the components of poetic representation, saying, "The Spectacle has, indeed, an emotional attraction of its own, but, of all the parts, it is the least artistic, and connected least with the art of poetry." What we tend to remember of science fiction is its amazing, astounding scenery. Slowly sinking into Jupiter, the heroes of "The Way to Amalteia" cannot but marvel at what they see:

> They saw broad motionless zigzags of lightning, running from the darkness above to the pink abyss below, and heard the lilac discharges pulsing with an iron thunder. They saw some sort of fluttering films that flew close by with a high-pitched whistle

and

> Enormous rainbow spheres rose up out of the yellow-pink abyss. They resembled soap bubbles and shone green, blue, red.

On Arthur C. Clarke's pre-Voyager Jupiter, envisioned in 1972, giant living forms adorn the vaporous vastness—mile-wide floating medusas and herds of arrowhead-shaped cattle browse upon "the cloud pastures . . . the dark, red-brown streaks that ran like dried-up river beds down the flanks of the floating cliffs." In Gérard Klein's "The Valley of Echoes," a smaller, harder planet is evoked: "The Martian sky was always like itself, very pure, a very dark blue with an occasional hint of gray, and with admirable pink efflorescences at sunrise and sunset." Horizons seem "short, curtailed" as tractors traverse the monotonous "gray sand and scattered lichens." Then: "Suddenly, we saw surge up and grow on the horizon translucent needles of rock, so thin and so high, with such sharp contours, that we did not believe our eyes."

The human scenery, too, in science fiction strains optical belief; in "The Fifth Head of Cerberus," women of the future parade

> in costumes that displayed their rouged breasts in enclosures of twisted wire like birdcages, or gave them the appearance of great height (dissolved only when someone stood very close to them), or gowns whose skirts reflected their wearers' faces and busts as still water does the trees standing near it, so that they appeared, in the intermittent colored flashes, like the queens of strange suits in a tarot deck.

And when we come to extraterrestrial life forms the sky is the limit. Near to *Homo sapiens*, only a mutation away, is a comely female in Brian Aldiss's "A Kind of Artistry": "She was a velure, born of the dense y-cluster worlds in Vermilion Outer, and her skin was richly covered with the brown fur of her kind." In the middle distance, picturable in cartoon fashion, are Josef Nesvadba's macro-microscopic truth-seekers: "One was almost the size of a whale and looked something like a

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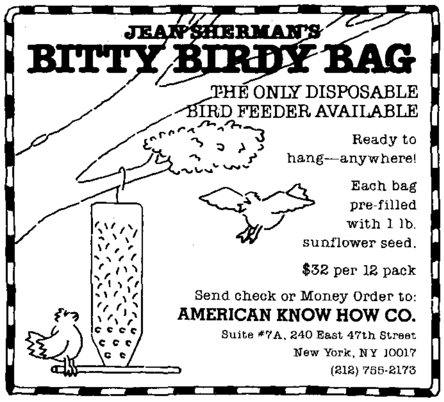

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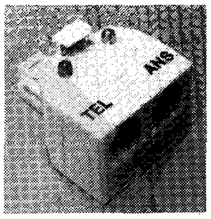

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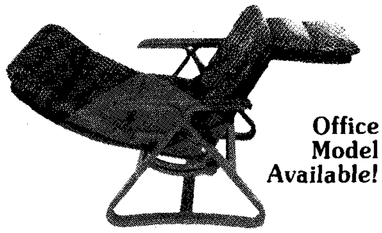

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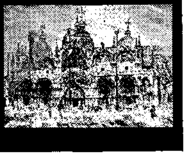

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swollen ciliaphore; another was covered with flagella, while another featured eight feet. They were all transparent, and he could see a strange liquid pulsating through their bodies." At an extreme of strangeness, so strange that sheer proximity mutually gives man and creature a killing psychic pain, is the giant alien of Damon Knight's "Stranger Station," visible only in televised glimpses:

> A tangle of nameless limbs, whiplike filaments, claws, wings. . . . The great clustered eyes were staring directly into the camera; the coiled limbs threshed in pain: the eyes were staring, asking, pleading. . . . The thick stems were like antennae, the leaves thoraxes, the buds like blind insect-eyes. The whole picture moved slightly, endlessly, in a slow waiting rhythm.

The seriousness of such conjurations rests upon the possibility that they are not impossible—that they might, somewhere, sometime, exist. But our improved knowledge of the solar system and beyond offers no confirmation; we seem to be stunningly alone. Science fiction stretches across the paradoxical gap between the infinity and the vacuity of extraterrestrial space. Feasible travel to all but the nearest stars, even granting spaceships a speed near that of light, would consume human lifetimes. Robot exploration of the solar system has discovered no life, not even on Mars, with its ancient traces of a watery atmosphere. The astronomical facts, since the days of H. G. Wells's marvellously populated planetary fantasies, add up to chemical bleakness. Yet fantasy fiction wishes to provide escape *into* plenitude, wherein the dreadful thinness of space is magically enriched. Nathalie-Charles Henneberg, in "The Blind Pilot," unveils, in the visions of a hero bewitched by a manateelike alien, "the star spirals and the harmonies . . . oceans of rubies, furnaces of emeralds, dark stars, constellations coiled like luminous dragons. Meteorites were a rain of motionless streaks. Novas came to meet him; they exploded and shattered in sidereal tornadoes, the giants and dwarfs fell again in incandescent cascades. Space-time was nothing but a flaming chalice." Alas, the chalice appears empty, except for what we put into it. Stanislaw Lem, in his fairy tale "How Erg the Self-Inducting Slew a Paleface," parodies the universe as adventure site; his hero is lying when he tells of

> lands unknown to anyone, such as that of the Periscones, who build hot sluices of corruption; of the planet of the Epoxy-eyed—these merged before him into rows of black billows, for that is what they do in time of war, but he hewed them in two. . . . And he spoke of the transparent ice-planet Aberrabia, which like a diamond lens holds the image of the entire Universe within itself; there he copied down the way to palefaceland. He told of a region of eternal silence, Alumnium Cryotrica, where he saw only the reflections of the stars in the surfaces of hanging glaciers; and of the kingdom of the molten Marmaloids, who fashion boiling baubles out of lava, and of the Electropneumaticists, who in mists of methane, in ozone, chlorine and the smoke of volcanos are able to kindle the spark of intelligence, and who continually wrestle with the problem of how to put into a gas the quality of genius.

This marvellous spoof (marvellously translated from the Polish by Michael Kandel) goes on and on, a bejewelled memorial to our romantic expectations of space.

The future, too, feels deromanticized: more pollution, more population, more poverty on this pooped planet. It is touching, in Mr. Hartwell's world treasury, to discover that some of the futuristic tales now happen in the past. Alfred Bester's "The Men Who Murdered Mohammed," with its omniscient government and Professorships of Applied Compulsion, occurs in 1980, having been published in 1958. Now we know 1980 wasn't quite like that, nor was 1984. Fritz Leiber's parody of L. Ron Hubbard's scientism, "Poor Superman," locates its post-atomic-war wastelands and glitzy governmental towers in an "America approaching the end of the twentieth century," which in 1951 must have seemed fantastically remote. Are we, as the fabled twenty-first century approaches, still innocent enough to dream of escape into either the future or the realms of other stars? Or has the future come too close to escape to, and are the stars revealed as, in all their random splendor, out of reach?

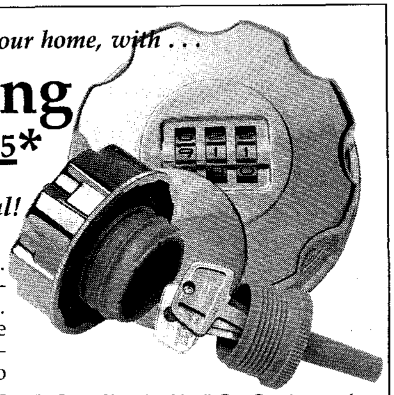
—JOHN UPDIKE

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

GOODNIGHT!, by Abram Tertz (Andrei Sinyavsky), translated from the Russian by Richard Lourie (Viking; $22.95). In the late fifties and early sixties, several books by a dissident Russian writer were smuggled to the West and published under the pseudonym Abram Tertz. In 1965, the Soviet literary scholar Andrei Sinyavsky was arrested for the crime of being Abram Tertz and sentenced to seven years in the Gulag. (Sinyavsky had borrowed the provocatively Jewish name of his alter ego from a group of songs about a daring criminal in Odessa.) This stunning autobiographical novel, originally published in Paris in 1984, is composed as a collaboration between "Sinyavsky the brain" and "Abram Tertz, my shady double," "that rogue in the bazaar of literature." Tertz's remorseless laughter gives sinew to Sinyavsky's lyricism, and the Tertz persona adds a "haphazard and dubious" element to Sinyavsky's stories of his arrest and interrogation, of life in the camps, of the persecution of his father and his own disillusionment during the last years of Stalin's rule, and of the spiritual deformation of the boyhood friend who apparently betrayed him to the state security agents. When a doctrinaire writer protests, "If we publish Pasternak . . . Poland will secede," followed by Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the Ukraine, and the Caucasus, Sinyavsky-Tertz's reaction is "Fly away, little birds!"

ORDINARY MONEY, by Louis B. Jones (Viking; $18.95). In this charming but wobbly novel about high-school pals entering middle age with less money than they would like, money turns a plot with a centrifugal power in danger of revving the fragile human comedy right off the page. Both Randy and Wayne fall prey to con men—one a counterfeiter of twenty-dollar bills, the other a huckster for a telemarketing scam. Both victims understand the foolhardiness of what they are doing before they do it, but each perseveres, in his own style of desperation. Also desperate are their teen-age daughters: Randy's daughter for her divorced father's attention, Wayne's for the attention of a boy she thinks she can't possibly deserve. The rude language of high-school kids is funny; the standard shtick of a mother's Marin County psychobabble is not. The schematism and contrivance of the story have the strained, overlit flatness of a cynically commercial movie, but, luckily, there is the au-



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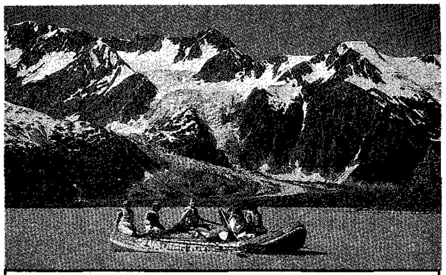

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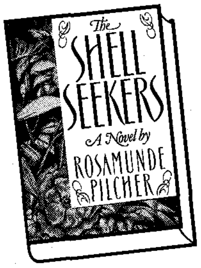

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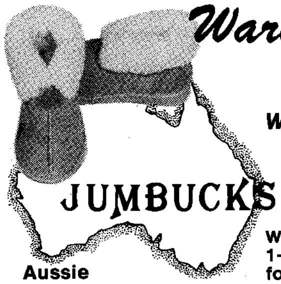

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GENERAL

Luther: Man Between God and the Devil, by Heiko A. Oberman, translated from the German by Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (Yale; $29.95). "We can encounter Luther only where he was convinced he stood and not where he approximates the temper of our time," Mr. Oberman writes. Yet, even as he clarifies intellectual differences and psychological distances, his remarkable study, combining learning, realism, and literary adroitness, brings us close to Luther. He shows us a man imbued with urgency by his expectation of an imminent Last Judgment and his loathing of the Devil, whose active malice, he felt, constantly threatened the human race. The author explains how Luther's theology affected German politics, although Luther himself was not a German nationalist. Above all, this portrait conveys Luther's power: the intensity of his faith, the coherence of his thought, the force of his personality.

Monet by Himself: Paintings, Drawings, Pastels, Letters, edited by Richard Kendall, translated from the French by Bridget Strevens Romer (Bulfinch/Little, Brown; $55). This book lays before us the long life of Claude Monet through his letters to his family, friends, colleagues, and dealers. The letters, which cover the years from 1859 to 1926 (the year he died), show him to have been down-to-earth, a man not much given to reflection or speculation. ("I've always had a horror of theories," he wrote.) We see him in the early years doggedly painting, even in poverty. He begs friends for money; his young wife dies; friends let him down, and he tells them off. He travels in search of new motifs—to the Mediterranean, to Brittany and Holland—painting prodigiously. With success, life becomes easier: there is a new wife and a growing family. In old age, he is afflicted with eye trouble while painting the famous series of water lilies, and also by self-doubt; in his seventy-second year, he tells a critic, "No, I am not a great painter." Yet he never gives up, and is still producing, and destroying what doesn't measure up.

Last Places: A Journey in the North, by Lawrence Millman (Houghton Mifflin; $18.95). The places that Mr. Millman likes are "far-flung, old-fashioned, and without amenities." In his new book, they are, specifically, icy, windswept, and desolate. He is a ranking traveller of the chilblained (or sunscorched) school, who seeks out an amplitude of severe physical discomfort and then returns home to describe his sore feet, his empty belly, his stinking clothes, his mosquito bites, and his frequent panics in the lightest, merriest of voices: "We go past a skerry as wrinkled as an old work glove and twice as cheerless. . . . When we sit down to supper, we dine on boiled seal meat, seasoned with somewhat rancid seal oil." The journey on which he enthusiastically leads us is the presumed old Viking route from Norway to the Shetland Islands to the Faeroe Islands to Iceland to Greenland to Labrador.

Harold Macmillan: Volume II, 1957-1986, by Alistair Horne (Viking; $27.50). The second, and concluding, volume of this affectionate biography of a complex man opens just after its subject has been appointed Prime Minister, with the immediate task of restoring Anglo-American relations and British finances, both shattered by the failure of the Suez adventure. Macmillan went on to cope with non-stop crises, as Africa was decolonized, Khrushchev was making mischief the world around, de Gaulle was out for revenge on *les anglo-saxons*, and the boomlet of the late nineteen-fifties gave way to stagflation. Meanwhile, the domestic politics of the United Kingdom went from squabble to squabble. This biography's assets include a reliable view of modern history and lively pictures of its villains and heroes, and, in particular, an astute portrayal of Macmillan, an intrinsically fascinating character. He was a reflective, retiring, bookish man who had to reinvent himself for public life.

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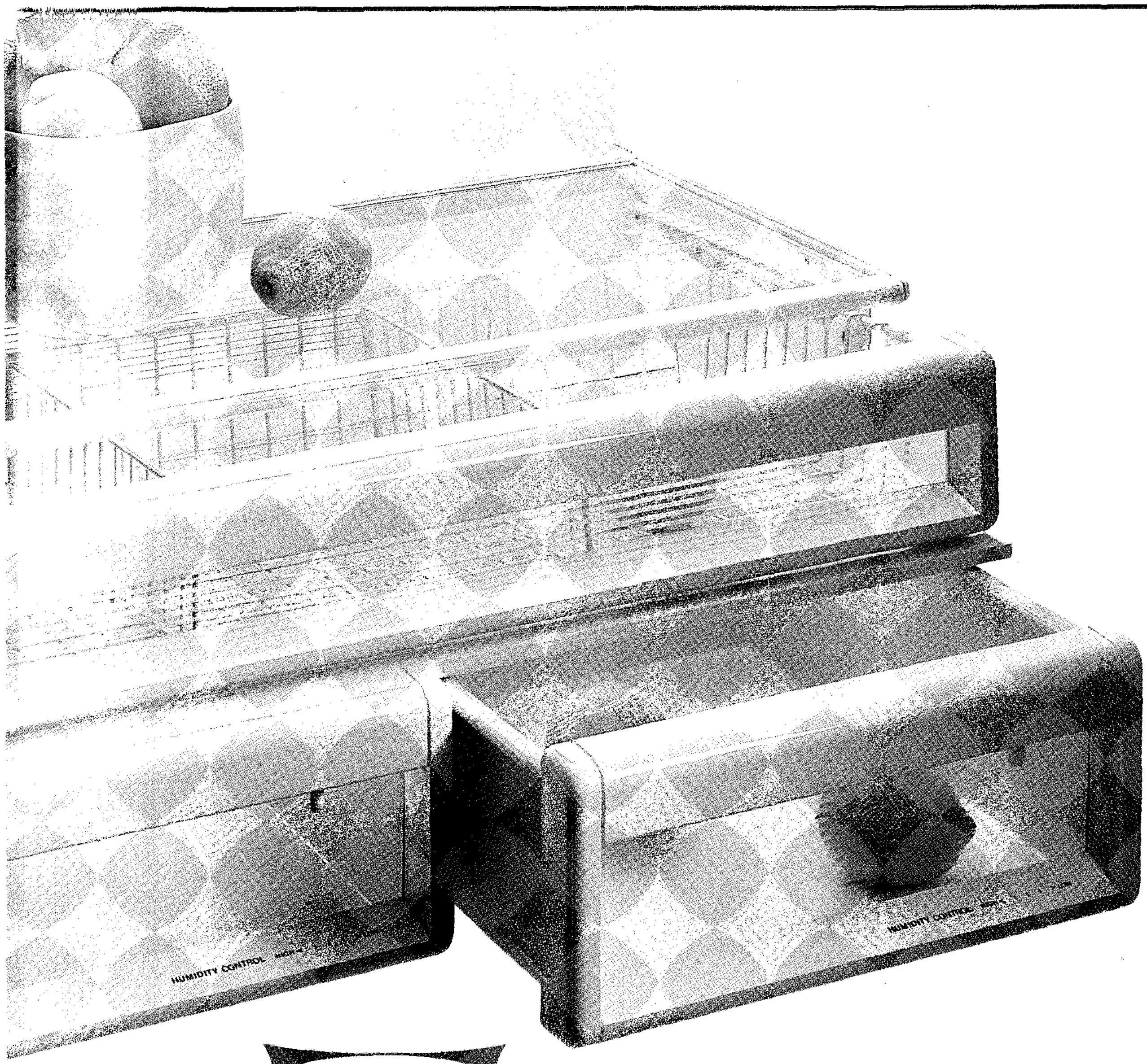

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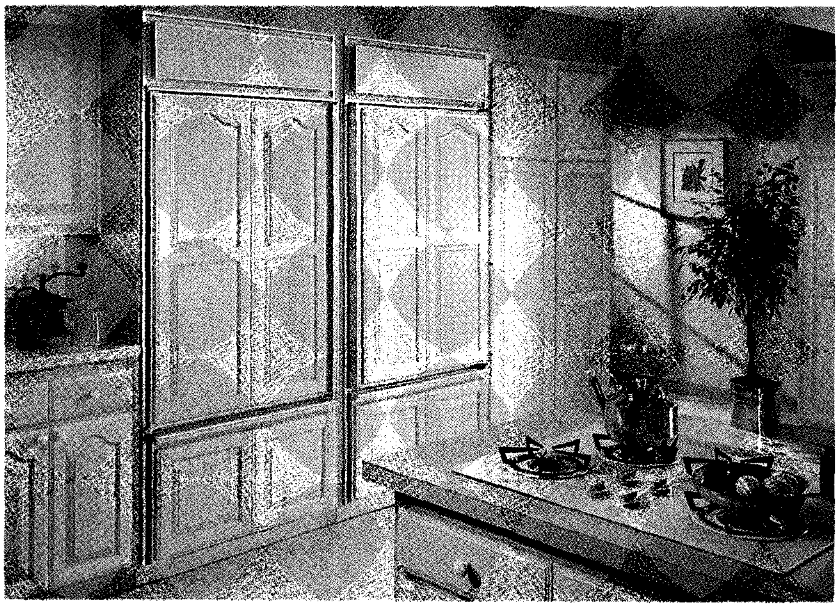

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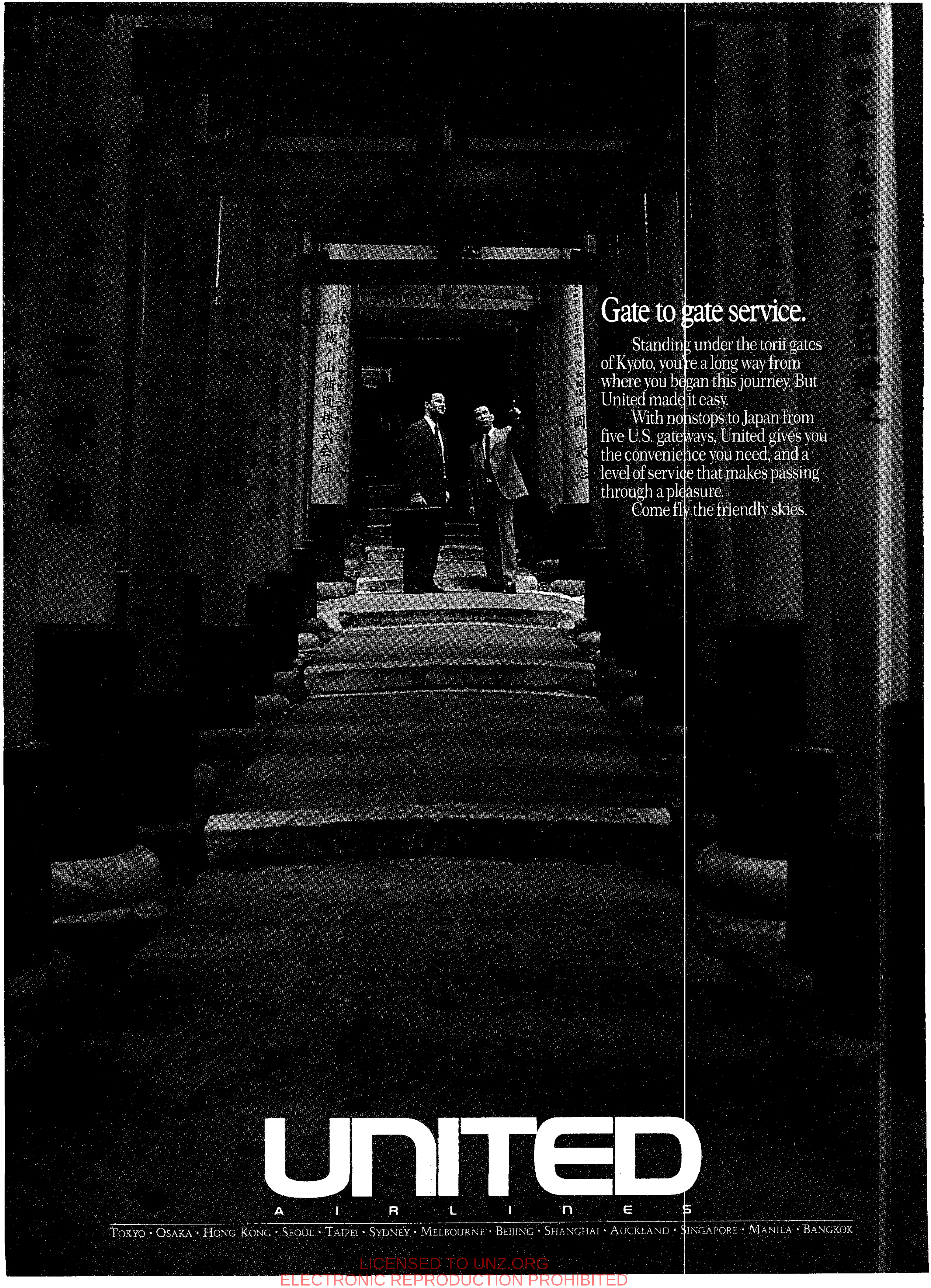

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